

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
LADY BARTON.

V O L. II.

THE

HISTORY



LADY

JOHN

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
LADY BARTON,
A
N O V E L,

IN LETTERS,
BY MRS. G R I F F I T H.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L II.

Quibus pretium faceret ipsa fragilitas.

PLIN. de Cryſtallo.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. DAVIES, in Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-garden;
and T. CADELL, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXI,

THE
HISTORY
OF
LADY BARTON
IN
O.V.E.



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

Printed by J. G. & J. H. Smith, 10, St. Paul's Churchyard, London.

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MCCCLXXII.

THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
L A D Y B A R T O N.

LETTER XXXI.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Southfield.

MY story is already prefaced ; so I need but proceed, repeating as before, after Mrs. Walter.

For the first ten or twelve days that I passed at Paris, the novelty of the scene, with the grandeur and brilliancy of the objects that surrounded me, lifted me, as it were, out of myself, and helped me for that time almost to forget my misfortunes. The marchioness made me several very

2 THE HISTORY OF

considerable presents, and ordered her trade's people to attend me, that I might chuse my own cloaths, only desiring they might be handsome enough to appear in along with her.

Madame de Fribourg received a vast deal of company, and kept very late hours; monsieur de Lovaine was seldom of her parties, and sometimes withdrew himself intirely from the house, for a fortnight together; she used to appear dissatisfied at his absence, and frequently complained to me of the coldness and constraint of his manners towards her.—He used sometimes, to visit me, in my apartment, seemed fond of my little Olivia, and often wished that he had such another child—He said the marchioness's mode of living, was by much too gay and
4 dissipated

dissipated for him, and that he languished for the pleasures of society in a more rational course of life.

Small as was my knowledge of the world, I could not help perceiving that there was something particular in monsieur de Lovaine's address, whenever he spoke to me; but this circumstance, however, was not of a nature to give offence, as it amounted to nothing more than an additional softness, in his looks and voice.

The marchioness certainly perceived it as well as I, and would often fix her piercing eyes upon me, and ask me if Colonel Walter was as handsome as monsieur de Lovaine? I always replied, as I really thought, that the Colonel was by far the handsomest man I had ever

4 THE HISTORY OF

seen—She used to appear pleased with what she called my simplicity—At other times her manners were severe towards me; and, though perfectly convinced of my own innocence, I began soon to fear that I was become the object of her jealousy.

This idea was productive of the most fatal consequences to my peace; it rendered my behaviour timid and constrained, before her, and totally deprived me of that ease and cheerfulness which I had before endeavoured to assume, in hopes of rendering myself agreeable to my kind benefactress—This alteration in me, which her own manners had occasioned, she construed into the effect of guilt, and became every day more cold and reserved towards me,

scarce

LADY BARTON. 5

scarce ever asked me to go out with her, and as often affected to be surprised, when she saw me come into her drawing-room.

Though my situation with the marchioness was by no means the *ne plus ultra* of my hopes and wishes, which continually pressed forward to the meeting of Olivia's father, my still loved, cruel husband ! yet certainly I had reason to consider it as an happy asylum for my child, and me ; her bounty had rescued both of us from the iron hand of poverty, and placed us in the lap of plenty, of honour, and of ease ! How then could I bear the being suspected of repaying such benefits with the basest sort of ingratitude ! It was impossible ! I determined, therefore, to come to an expla-

6 THE HISTORY OF

nation with the marchioness, if possible; to convince her of my innocence, and do all in my power to recover her esteem; but if I failed of removing her suspicions, I firmly resolved to quit her directly, to throw myself and my infant once more into a merciless world, to labour for our bread, and suffer any misery that poverty could afflict me with, rather than that of embittering her life, to whom I owed the generous support of my own.

I had revolved this subject in my thoughts for several days, and impatiently waited for an opportunity of executing my scheme, but the distance and *hauteur* of madame de Fribourg's manner, overawed me still. I found I could not muster up spirit sufficient to speak
to

LADY BARTON. 7

to her on such an interesting topic, and I resolved, therefore, to communicate my sentiments to her in writing.

One evening that she went to the Italian comedy, I retired to my chamber, in order to execute my purpose; and, that I might not be interrupted, I desired the maid who attended Olivia, to take her down stairs and amuse her, till I should ring for her to come up, as I had some letters of consequence to write—She withdrew, I bolted my chamber door, sat down to the task I had assigned myself—I found it infinitely more difficult than I had imagined; I wrote, and burned several sheets of paper, and blotted others, with my tears.

In this situation, I heard a key turn, as it were behind the arras, and saw

8 THE HISTORY OF

monfieur de Lovaine entering by a door which had been till then concealed from me. I started up, when he threw himfelf, instantly, at my feet, faid he had long waited in vain for the opportunity of finding me alone, for a moment, and hoped I would pardon his acquainting me, perhaps, a little too abruptly, with a fecret on which more than his life, his happinefs, depended — to be fhort, he then declared his love for me, with all the affeverations, proteftations, and tranfports, that the moft violent paffion could fuggeft.

No words can paint the furprife and confufion of my mind, which I thought it was impoffible to augment, till I faw the marchionefs come in at the door which monfieur de Lovaine had left open,
and

and find him on his knees before me. Luckily for me, I was saved from distraction, by the total suspension of all my faculties; and I sunk motionless in my chair.

Many hours passed, before my reason returned—My recollection of the events that had happened on the preceding night, was such as one feels on awaking from a painful dream; yet I flattered myself I should still be able to undeceive the marchioness, by the most solemn assurances of my innocence, and though I could never hope to regain her favour, justice methought ought to have restored me to the place I had before obtained in her esteem—Alas! I knew not then that jealousy, like the adder, is at once sharp-sighted, deaf, and venomous.

B 5

I rose

10 THE HISTORY OF

I rose as soon as it was day, and upon inquiring for the papers which I left upon my table, was informed that the marchioness had taken them away—I waited impatiently for her rising, I was determined to throw myself at her feet, the moment I should be permitted to see her, to acquaint her with every sentiment of my heart, and to set hers at ease, on my account, by withdrawing myself from her's, and monsieur de Lovaine's sight, for ever.

While I was ruminating on my unhappy situation, a servant brought me the following letter.

A Madame D'OLIVET.

AFTER the scene I was last night an *accidental* witness of, you cannot, I
sup-

suppose, be weak enough to imagine that it is any longer in your power to impose upon me; or that all your art, consummate as it is, can prevail on me to continue my protection to the most ungrateful of her sex! Your deep-laid scheme of deceiving me, by that letter, which you and my unworthy husband had concerted together, cannot now take effect; contempt must follow such a detection, and render you as much below my resentment, as you ever were beneath my esteem.

In regard to myself, I must inform you, that though I have long suspected an improper intercourse between monsieur de Lovaine and you, I was not actuated by so mean a motive as seeking the conviction I met with, when I enter-

ed your apartment—Impelled by the regard I once had for you, I was impatient to acquaint you with what I then imagined might have been a welcome piece of intelligence, by informing you, that the person you call your husband, is in Paris, and that I had seen him at the Comedie.

It did not, at that moment, occur to me, how unwelcome both the news, and the messenger might be to you.—On inquiring for you when I came home, I was told that you had bolted your door, and given orders not to be disturbed, even by your darling child; I knew not but you might be ill, or gone to bed, and therefore, to avoid alarming you, thought of the private door, which your lover had been so careless as to leave open

open behind him.—I do not mean this detail as an apology to you, but as a justification to myself.

I have nothing farther to add, because I must suppose it unnecessary to command you to quit my house; your new protector will, I doubt not, furnish you with proper accommodation; and from this moment I am determined never to hear, see, speak, or if possible think of you, more.

MARIANA DE FRIBOURG.

I sat down, on the instant, and wrote to the marchioness, and, in the strongest and most affecting terms, implored her to admit me to her presence, for a few minutes—but in vain; she returned my letter unopened, with a message by her woman,

man, that she would never read a line that I should write, or ever suffer me into her presence more.

I grew almost distracted at this treatment, and tried to force my way into her apartment, but was prevented from entering by her servants, and treated like what I really then was, a poor frantic wretch!

The consciousness of my integrity might possibly have supported my spirits, at any other time, but the terrors I felt, lest the marchioness should see my husband before I did, and poison his mind with her unjust suspicions, were not to be endured—My situation was as completely miserable, as any thing, but guilt, could possibly have rendered it.

While

While I laboured under these agonizing sensations, monsieur de Lovaine entered my apartment—The moment I beheld him, rage, for the first time of my life, became the predominant passion of my soul. I accused him as the author of all my wretchedness, would not suffer him to speak, though he was prostrate at my feet, and commanded him to fly from my sight for ever—Unwilling to irritate me farther, he rose and retired; and had there been an instrument of death within my reach, I fear I might at that instant have put an end to a wretched being, which saw itself marked out for destruction.

I was at last informed by the marchioness's orders, that a *fiacre* waited to carry me where I pleased.—Though I had
been

16 THE HISTORY OF

been near ten months at Paris, I was as much a stranger in that great city, as on the day I first arrived there. I implored the servant who had attended Olivia, not to forsake me, and to direct whither I should go, and what course I should take ! She applied to her lady for leave to attend me, but she had not humanity sufficient to grant her request.—The girl had, however, resolution and compassion enough to disobey her commands, and accompanied me to a small house in the suburbs of St. Germain, that belonged to her sister.

As soon as she had brought me there, she returned again to the hôtel de Fribourg, without my knowledge, to pack up my cloaths, and her own—When she came back, she gave me a
pocket

LADY BARTON. 17

pocket book, which she said I had left behind me; as soon as I saw it, I knew it was not mine, and desired she would find the owner, and restore it—She opened it, and a letter dropped out, addressed to me—the hand appeared to be the marchioness's, and it occurred to me that she might have so far relented, as to acquaint me with what she knew of Colonel Walter—I instantly broke the seal, and read as follows.

A Madame D'OLIVET.

MADAM, if, as we are taught to believe, penitence may atone for the greatest crimes, the true sorrow and contrition which I feel for having rendered you unhappy, entitles me to hope for your forgiveness—But though you should be generous enough to grant it, it is impos-

18 THE HISTORY OF

impossible that I should ever forgive myself. —Do not be alarmed, madam, at the little artifice I have used, in endeavouring to counterfeit the marchioness's hand ; I mean nothing more by it, than to plead for pardon, and to satisfy you that I shall never more attempt to disturb your peace.

The moment I have sealed this, I shall quit Paris, perhaps for ever—The sight of my tyrant, is now become odious to me, and I dare not flatter myself with the happiness of ever again beholding you. I go, then, Madam, to indulge my unhappy passion in silence, and retirement—I fly from the object of my hatred, to the contemplation of her whom I adore, of her to whom the warmest wishes of my heart, shall for
ever

LADY BARTON. 19

ever be devoted, and to whom I shall
for ever remain

a passionate,

but an honourable lover,

CHARLES DE LOVAINE.

P. S. I hear the happy possessor of
your heart, is now in Paris; may your
virtues meet with their return from his
kindness! and may he, if possible, have
as high a sense of them, as the despair-
ing

C. L.

Enclosed in this letter there was a
bank note, for two hundred louis d'ors,
which I immediately sealed up with it,
and sent Maria to deliver back into the
hands of monsieur de Lovaine; but he
had quitted the marchioness's house, an
hour

20 THE HISTORY OF

hour before that time, and no person could tell where he was gone to.

The violent agitation of spirits I had gone through brought on a feverish complaint, and though I had resolved to go, alas ! I knew not where, in pursuit of Colonel Walter, I found myself unable to sit up, and was obliged to submit to my disorder—I grew worse every hour, and by the next morning I became delirious—The physician who attended me, thought it was impossible that I should recover, and at the end of six weeks, my being able to crawl across the chamber was deemed a prodigy.

The anxiety of my mind, doubtless retarded my recovery ; my impatience to see Colonel Walter, or at least to hear
some-

something of him, increased every day; and Maria's sister was sent to inquire for him, at all the hotels, and houses of English resort, in Paris, but without ever receiving the least glimmering of light to trace him by.

As soon as my strength would permit, I was carried in a sedan to the Luxemburg gardens; Maria attended, that I might lean on her, in case I should be able to walk.—I was moving slowly on, in one of the most retired walks, when I heard Colonel Walter's voice; I turned quick to look for him, and saw him coming towards me, with another gentleman—But I saw no more, my senses forsook me; in spite of Maria's sustaining arm, I fell motionless on the ground.

The

The first emotions of humanity naturally brought both these persons to my assistance, the colonel raised me in his arms, and carried me to the next seat ; but the moment he beheld my face, he started from me, and cried out, Come away, my lord, and leave that abandoned woman to practise her arts on other men, for here they cannot be successful.

He then took hold of his companion, dragged him off, and quitted the gardens with the utmost precipitation — And though Maria had sense enough to know that this must have been the person we had so long been in search of, yet it was impossible for her to quit me, in the situation I then was, in order to pursue and watch his haunts.

This

This last shock quite overcame my spirits ; I was conveyed home in a state of insensibility, fell from one fainting fit into another, and for several weeks my existence was marked only by the hourly expectation of my dissolution—Yet was I at that time more anxious to live, than I had ever been before ; I had seen my husband, and hoped there was a possibility of seeing him again, of clearing my innocence, and at least of placing my beloved child under the protection of her father ! These were strong motives, and they operated accordingly—I recovered, to the amazement of every creature that knew me ; and again vainly renewed my search after my unkind fugitive.

Maria used sometimes to visit a favourite fellow-servant at the marchioness's,

ness's, who told her it was universally believed in the family, that I had had an amour with Monsieur de Lovaine ; that he had entirely absented himself from his lady ; and that she seemed inclined to console herself for his loss, by a particular intimacy with an English gentleman, who made one in all her parties, and was going with her in a few days, to the waters of Barege—The description she gave of his person exactly resembled Colonel Walter, and I was perfectly convinced that this new friend of the marchioness's was my still beloved, deceived, and unkind husband !

I had no person to consult, who was capable of advising me how I should act upon this occasion ; and amidst a variety of wild and romantic schemes, I at last pitched

pitched on that of writing to him, and requesting the favour of an interview, in the character of a stranger. I had no doubt that if he accepted my invitation, nature would recover her rights in his heart; and that the sight of a woman whom he had once fondly loved, and cruelly deserted, with the additional influence of his lovely child, would melt his obdurate nature, or at least soften it so far as to allow me to assert my innocence, and endeavour to awaken the feelings of parental affection, if every other species of tenderness were even totally extinguished.

Full of these fond ideas, I wrote to him in an ambiguous stile, disguised my hand as much as possible, and would not even venture to direct my letter, lest the recollection of my writing, which is ra-

26 THE HISTORY OF

ther particular, should prevent his opening it.—Maria prevailed on her friend, who lived at the marchioness's, to deliver this billet to his servant, and to desire that the answer might be left with her.

Every thing answered to my expectations, and, the morning following, I received a very galant note, assuring me that the person I had honoured with my invitation, would most gladly accept of the favour I intended him, and have the happiness of waiting on me, at eight o'clock that evening.

My poor foolish heart exulted with joy, at the success of my little stratagem. I dressed and undressed Olivia, an hundred times, in order to try if I could add any ornament to her natural beauty, and

render her more lovely in her father's eyes—as to myself I disdained the aid of dress, well knowing that my wan complexion, and my wasted form, could only furnish him with such a reproachful idea as my ghost might have done, of what I was when he forsook me.

I counted the minutes quicker than they passed, and thought them ages, till the appointed hour arrived—but, gracious Heaven! how shall I express the astonishment I felt, when I saw an utter stranger enter the room, with a mixture of libertinism and freedom, in his looks and manners; I let go Olivia's hand, which I had held in mine, gave a loud shriek, and fainted.

Maria ran to my assistance, the stranger gazed intently on me, and said to her,

28 THE HISTORY OF

with a kind of sneer, it was a pity that her lady was subject to such violent disorders, but hoped she would recover her health before she made another assignation with him; for he had seen her faint twice, and he did not think fits were the least addition to female beauty--However, as he believed she might be in distress, he would make her a present of five guineas, for the sake of an old friend of her's, honest Jack Walter—and that when he came back from Barege, he would call upon her again, in hopes of finding her in a more sociable state than she appeared to be, at present.

Maria instantly recollected that this gentleman was with the Colonel, the day we met him in the Luxemburg gardens, and endeavoured to convince him, that
he

he was not the person I expected to see : he said that was impossible, for he had my note in his pocket, and had shewn it to Colonel Walter, who knew my writing perfectly well, though I had attempted to disguise it.—She tried every argument to make him take back his money, but in vain ; and as he found that I did not immediately come to myself, he quitted the house, with strong expressions of dissatisfaction at his disappointment.

This last stroke was infinitely more severe than all that I had yet endured ; I now saw the impossibility of ever clearing my conduct to my husband, and devoted as I was, by him, to infamy, the peaceful asylum of the sheltering grave was now become my only hope, or wish ;

even a mother's tenderness could not reconcile me to such unmerited and endless sufferings; that virtuous fondness which had sustained me through all my former trials, was now absorbed in mean self-love, and I could not refrain from praying for an end of my misery, though certain that my Olivia's misfortunes must commence from the conclusion of mine.

I languished on, for many months, in this state of passive despair, when the sight of the good father Guillaume, whom I had never heard from since I left Marseilles, and of course concluded to be dead, brought back a gleam of joy.

He told me that after his return to Marseilles, he had a long and severe illness, and on his recovery had been obliged
to,

to go to Rome, on business; that he had written to me, several times, and was grieved to find that his letters had miscarried. — He informed me, that Nannette had died, in about six weeks after I left her; that she was extremely penitent for the injuries she had done me; and retracted every thing she had said to my prejudice—I dropped tears at her untimely fate — while my own misery taught me to envy that lot, which my humanity lamented.

The marchioness had written to father Guillaume, and accused me of the basest ingratitude to her, and the most infamous conduct with regard to myself; and the good man had come on purpose, to Paris, to be, as he said, convinced of my innocence, or to relinquish his opinion

of female virtue. The situation he found me in, afforded him sufficient conviction of my integrity; and when I related the circumstances in which I had been involved, the gracious drops of pity that he shed for my distress, were like a healing balm to my poor wounded heart.

He would have gone directly to the marchioness, and tried to undeceive her, but she had been at Barege, for some time, and no one knew whether she would go from thence to Paris, or Marseilles.—He undertook to find out Colonel Walter for me, if he remained in Paris; and cheered my spirits with the hope that he would at least vindicate my injured character, and leave him no excuse for the inhumanity of his behaviour.

After

After a fruitless search of several weeks, he learned that Colonel Walter was then at Genoa—He wrote to him, in the most forcible terms, in my favour; but to this, and many other letters, he never deigned an answer; though we were satisfied that he had received them from the hand of a person that Father Guillaume could depend on; who afterwards informed us of the Colonel's setting out for England, and of his design of returning to settle in his native country.

As to myself, I had now no hope left of ever recovering his esteem, or my reputation—To my great joy I perceived I was going fast into a consumption; but though I longed for my release, it was impossible to quit my little charge exposed to all the miseries of unfriended

34 THE HISTORY OF

youth, without suffering the severest agonies; and after many consultations, upon the subject, I at last acquiesced in Father Guillaume's opinion, that it was my duty not to leave her totally an orphan, but to place her and myself under the protection of her father, before I should be taken from her.

Upon this principle I set out for Ireland, as soon as I had received information, through Father Guillaume's means, of my husband's being there. I arrived about four months ago: my reception surpassed even my apprehensions! inhumanity and insult were added to unkindness, and my not being turned out to perish in the highway, was accounted a favour far beyond my desert.—What account the Colonel gave of me to his servants, I can

can only suppose ; but he told me that if ever I attempted to converse with one of them, I should not remain another moment in his house ; he commanded me never again to appear in his sight, and confined me to a wretched garret, where I am supplied with such food as his servants think proper to afford me.

Unworthy as I am, I have often repined at the continuance of my existence ; but I now bless the chastening hand that has enabled me to support my miseries to this auspicious hour ; when I can no longer doubt that my child shall find protection from your humanity, and no more be involved in the unhappy fate that has so long attended her truly wretched mother !

36 THE HISTORY OF

The agonies which Mrs. Walter sustained, during the recital of her affecting story, made me fear that her death would bring it to a period, before she had finished the relation— But my appearing, as I really was, sincerely interested in her misfortunes, seemed to furnish her with such a recruit of strength and spirits, as enabled her to undergo the reflection and recital of her unmerited sorrows.

The morning was pretty far advanced, by the time Mrs. Walter had concluded her narrative; I gave her the strongest assurances of my doing every thing in my power, both for herself, and her child— I pressed her to take share of my bed, for a few hours, which she refused, though she seemed so faint and exhausted, as to be scarce able to get up stairs. She said,
if

if Olivia should awaken and miss her, she would be alarmed, and might disturb the family. She added that one of her greatest anxieties, for some time past, had been for what her child should feel, if she should happen to expire in the night, and that the little helpless innocent should find her cold and insensible to her soft touch and voice!

As soon as she left me, I went to bed, but found it impossible to rest—I knew not in what manner to act; Sir William would probably be displeased at my interfering in Colonel Walter's affairs, yet was I determined, at all events, to fulfil my promise to this amiable unfortunate, and protect her and her child, as far as it might be in my power!

With

With this resolution I shall now take leave of my dearest Fanny, as I am extremely fatigued with writing; yet would not trespass so far on your patience, as to break off again, till I had concluded Mrs. Walter's story. — But, interested as I am for her, be assured that I am much more so for my beloved Fanny, and Sir George.

Where is he now, my sister? has Mrs. Colville's mystery been explained? is his heart more at ease after it? and has your's yet recovered that tranquillity, which should be the portion of the good and amiable? Alas! why is it not unalienably so? Yet Mrs. Walter wastes her days in sorrow, my Fanny mourns her ill-requited love, Sir George hangs pensive o'er his Delia's tomb, and my sad heart, too much in unison with mournful tones, responsive

responsive echoes back the sighs of all,
and mingles plaintive notes for its own
woes!

Adieu, my dearest sister,

L. BARTON.

LETTER XXXII.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

A Thousand thanks to my dear Louisa,
for the pleasing painful entertain-
ment which she has taken the trouble of
affording me—which is at present more
particularly suited to my situation,
than any other that could possibly be
devised.

In quest of happiness we should for-
ever cast our eyes downward, and the
tears

40 THE HISTORY OF

tears that flow from them, in contemplating the miseries of those who are more wretched than ourselves, will at last stifle the voice of self-love, and silence the complaints that arise from lesser sorrows—sometimes imaginary ones.

When I compare my sufferings with those of the unfortunate Olivia, I am shocked at my own ingratitude and impiety, for having ever dared to say I was unhappy ! The greatest misery I have endured, falls infinitely short of the least of hers.—

Like her, I have been forsaken by the man I love ; but then I have not, like her, been exposed to want and ignominy. Sheltered in the fostering arms of tender and affectionate friends, who sympathize
even

even with my weakness in lamenting an inconstant lover, blessed with reputation, health, and fortune—these circumstances render the comparison so very unfair, that it must be disadvantageous to make it. No, she is alone the paragon of unearned sufferings; and I hope there is not any one person living who has a right to dispute the “painful preeminence” with her.—

But where is she, now, Louisa? It is not possible that you can have left her in that Pandæmonium, which the great fiend inhabits! I cannot speak of Colonel Walter in milder terms. I am provoked that the infernal should have any shadow of pretence, for his barbarity to his angelic wife. — When the world once gets hold of a tale of scandal, is it not easy
to

to wrest it from them. — That wicked marchioness—but there will be no end to my letter, if I go on entering into particulars.

All I can say upon the whole, is this, that I fear your bringing her to Southfield may engage Sir William in a strife, either with the Colonel, or yourself: no one can tell which part; he will take, I should rather apprehend his siding with the monster, and quarrelling with you for intermeddling.

To avoid all this apprehension, if Mrs. Walter be able to bear the journey, on the easiest terms it can be made to her, request you to send her and her child over to me, as quick as possible. I will receive her with open arms, and do every

every thing in my power to procure her health, and peace : I have no person to whom I am accountable for my conduct, and therefore stand clearer from difficulty in this affair than you do.

I hope these reasons will incline both Mrs. Walter and you to comply with my entreaty, and that I shall soon have the happiness of embracing the two lovely Olivias.—She may depend on my secrecy : I can prepare this family, in half an hour, for the reception of a lady and her daughter from France, whom I have invited to spend some time with me ; I will carry her to Bristol, or any other place that may aid her recovery—She must not die Louisa ; and, for Heaven's sake, let me have the happiness of being concerned in her preservation.

I fear

I fear *self* has predominated too much in this wish, for indeed I look forward with an uncommon degree of impatience, to the pleasure of having it in my power to serve such an amiable creature—Do, my Louisa, then, indulge me with the true enjoyment of the fortune I am possessed of—Let me know the transport of succouring merit in distress, and I shall henceforward look upon riches as a real blessing!

I have this moment received a letter from our dear brother, that has amazed me.—What think you is the pretended request of the dying Delia? Why nothing more, than that Sir George should marry her mother! I have long suspected her passion for my brother; I knew her to be an artful, that is, in other words,
a vile

a vile woman! I cannot help the evil thoughts which obtrude themselves on my mind, with regard to my dear Delia's death—If Mrs. Colville be innocent, Heaven forgive me!—But I have not charity enough to pray for her, if she should be guilty.

Sir George does not express half the horror that I feel at this shocking proposal! the gratification which our vanity receives in knowing we are beloved, even by the most worthless person, can, I perceive, soften our contempt into compassion, and deceive us so far as to make us think such pity the offspring of our virtue--However, do not be alarmed; for though he speaks somewhat too tenderly of her pretended sorrow, I am certain no power on earth could ever make
him

46 THE HISTORY OF

him think of such an unnatural alliance.

I have little to say of myself; nothing of moment has happened to me since I wrote last; and I endeavour to think as little as possible, of what happened before.—Adieu, my dear Louisa! I hope there is a letter of yours now travelling towards me, for I am most extremely impatient to know what you have done, or intend to do, with Mrs. Walter. I beg you to assure her of my affectionate regard, and to believe me ever

most truly yours,

F. CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXXIII.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND:

Southfield:

THIS letter, my Fanny, shall go on in the narrative stile, at least so far as it relates to Mrs. Walter; for as her adventures are intirely detached from any thing relative to us, I will not mingle them with mine.

I lay till it was very late, on the morning that the fair unfortunate had related her story, yet I had neither slept, nor fixed upon any scheme for delivering her from her hated prison, except that of bringing her and her child to Southfield, which I foresaw must be attended with very hazardous consequences;

48 THE HISTORY OF

ces ; I therefore summoned a little council, the moment I arose, and after communicating the most distressful circumstances of her situation to Lucy, Harriet, and my faithful Benson, I desired them to give me their advice how to act, on this critical occasion ; having first informed them, that I was determined not to desert the cause I had undertaken, by leaving this amiable woman to perish at Waltersburgh.

Various, as you may suppose, were the plans offered and rejected—It was at last agreed, that we should return home as soon as possible ; and that Mrs. Walter should remain where she was, for three or four days after our departure ; that, in that time, Benson should be employed in fitting up a chamber for her

8

recep-

reception in the house of one of our tenants, whom I formerly mentioned to you, as having his house burned, and who had now got a very comfortable, though small, habitation, within a short walk of Southfield; that as soon as every thing was prepared, Benson should come for her in my chaise, to a particular spot, at a time appointed, and convey her and the little Olivia to this house, where she was to remain in profound secrecy, till we saw what effect this innocent elopement might produce, till every thing in our power should have been done for the recovery of her health, and till we could fix upon some more eligible plan for her future happiness.

As the Colonel's servants gave themselves not the least trouble about the fair

recluse, we found it very easy to convey proper food to her, unobserved; and as I thought it right that she should have time to consider of our scheme, I wrote to her directly, and desired to have the pleasure of another interview with her, in my apartment, that night.—I gave her to understand, in the politest manner I could, my reasons for declining to bring her directly to Southfield, at least till I had consulted my husband; and assured her in the strongest terms, that while I lived, neither she, or her child, should ever be reduced to the misery of seeking support or protection from the inhuman Colonel Walter. I added every thing that I thought could soothe her mind, and implored her to take care of her health, for the sake of her lovely infant.

She

She replied almost instantly to my letter, poured forth the warmest acknowledgments for my goodness, again called me her guardian angel, and said she was ready to be guided by me in every thing; and that, as the strongest mark of her gratitude, she would at my command endeavour to live, were it only to bless and thank me!

The impatience of Lucy and Harriet to see Mrs. Walter was extreme; they looked at their watches an hundred times, and would fain have persuaded themselves they did not, go from the moment it grew dusk till our hour of retiring; though it was yet a moot point, whether they were to see her or no, as I meant first to ask her permission, certainly, before I should present them to her.

D 2

When

When she entered my apartment, her countenance seemed at once more animated and composed than it had been the preceding night—the effusions of her gratitude were such as must flow from a heart like hers, and were more fully expressed by the silent eloquence of tears, than by the pomp of words—She readily and most gracefully complied with the request I made her, of giving me leave to introduce Lucy and Harriet to her; who, notwithstanding the description I had given them of the delicacy and elegance of her form, were both amazed when they beheld her, and could hardly consider her as of flesh and blood, but rather a form of unsubstantial air, or else composed of that fine ether with which we suppose angels indue themselves, when they deign to become visible on earth.

As both Mrs. Walter and I wanted rest, we parted sooner than we had done the foregoing night, after having first settled every thing for the execution of our project, and fixed on the day following for my quitting Waltersburg. Benson packed up a part of hers and Olivia's cloaths with mine, and we contrived to leave her every little necessary that could be conducive to her comfort or convenience, while she remained behind us.

I have now the pleasure to tell you that every thing succeeded to our wishes, and that she and her sweet girl are safely and privately lodged at honest farmer Wilson's, for the present. I write to her every day by Benson, but have not yet ventured to see her, as I am not able to walk, and the eclat of my

carriage stopping at a farm-house, might occasion suspicion.

Benson assures me that she already perceives a change for the better in her appearance ; and I begin to hope she may recover both her health and peace of mind. The little Olivia is quite wild with spirits, and is trying to learn English from Lucy, who visits Mrs. Walter every day, and the first words she desired to be taught, were meant to express her thanks to me for my kindness to her mamma.

Though I reflect with sincere pleasure on having been able to rescue this amiable woman from a scene of the severest distress, yet I cannot help feeling an anxiety for her future fate, which gives
me

me extreme pain—She cannot long remain where she is, undiscovered, and no one can tell what step that barbarian, her husband, may take to distress her yet farther—My apprehensions are, that he will force Olivia from her; and the loss of her child would, I am certain, occasion the loss of her life.

But supposing that he should never discover her retreat, or even inquire about her, I see no asylum, except a convent, where her youth and beauty will not subject her to a thousand misfortunes.—You are sufficiently acquainted

with my sentiments on the subject of monasteries, to know how very unwilling I should be to recommend a state of seclusion to any creature I either love or esteem; yet, in her unhappy situation,

56 THE HISTORY OF

I see no other resource.—However, I shall not advise precipitately.

Not but that I should approve extremely of an establishment of this kind, in our own country, under our own religion and laws ; both equally free from tyranny—An asylum for unhappy women to retreat to—not from the world, but from the misfortunes, or the slander of it—for female orphans, young widows, or still more unhappy objects, forsaken, or ill treated wives, to betake themselves to, in such distresses. For in all these circumstances, women who live alone, have need of something more than either prudence or a fair character, to guard them from rudeness or censure.

Now some sort of foundation, under the government of a respectable matronage,

age, endowed for such a purpose, would certainly be an institution most devoutly to be wished for, as a relief in the difficulties of those situations I have just mentioned. Here women might enjoy all the pleasures and advantages of living still in the world, have their conduct reciprocally vouched by one another, and be screened from those artful and insidious essays, which young or pretty women, when once become helpless adjectives of society, are generally liable to.

I have had a letter from Sir William, and for once he seems pleased with my determination of staying in the country. This has made me very happy—tho' had he commanded my attendance in Dublin, I would have obeyed; for I will at least endeavour to deserve the character

58 THE HISTORY OF

which the offended Moor gives of the gentle Desdemona—"As you say, obedient,—very obedient!"—and, as I have already told my Fanny, that is all that I can at present promise.

I think it is a little century since I have heard from you ; I suppose you did not chuse to interrupt me in my narrative, but I expect, and I think reasonably, that you should now hold forth, in your turn, and allow me credit for the entertainment which I am certain you must have received, from Mrs. Walter's story. I have this moment got a card from Miss Ashford, to congratulate me, on my recovery, and to let me know that Lord Lucan and she will wait on me, this afternoon.

Is

Is it not odd, Fanny, that I should not have heard of his being at Sir Arthur Ashford's, till now? Perhaps he went there directly from Walterburgh; if so, he must certainly be attached to Miss Ashford. But of what consequence are his engagements to me!

I shall not know how to behave to him, uncertain as I am with regard to that unaccountable adventure, at Colonel Walter's.—If he is innocent of that insult, he will be astonished at the coldness and distance of my manners towards him; if guilty, surely his own confusion will betray him, and he shall never see my face again.

But why should he bring Miss Ashford with him, to Southfield? Does not

this look as if he feared an explanation?

Guilty, guilty, upon honour!

Adieu, my sister,

LOUISA BARTON.

LETTER XXXIV.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

I Have such a variety of subjects to treat of, that I know not which to begin with; but I think I ought to pay my dear Fanny the compliment of attending first to her long wished-for and truly welcome letter.

I had not a doubt but that your humanity would be both affected and interested for the unhappy Mrs. Walter. The goodness both of your head and heart is eminently conspicuous in the proper use

you

you have made of her misfortunes. To lighten and invalidate our own sufferings, by comparing them with those of others, is truly philosophic : but that firmness of mind, or rather toughness of heart, which enables us to bear our own miseries with patience and composure, is, in general, but too apt to render us callous to those tender feelings, which should be excited by the woes of others.—Let me then congratulate myself on having a sister whose Stoicism is confined only to herself, while her tenderness and compassion are extended to the numerous, the unbounded circle of the unhappy !

Yes, my Fanny, your request shall be complied with; Mrs. Walter is already made happy in the hope of being known to such a generous mind as yours.

62 THE HISTORY OF

She has confessed to me, that, in her present situation, she had suffered a thousand apprehensions, lest my kindness to her might involve me in difficulties with Sir William; but that she could think of no expedient to prevent this evil, but flying to a convent, which she feared to propose, as her going there must be attended with what she thought too considerable an expence.

I should have strongly objected to this scheme, from her ill state of health, though she is, however, amazingly recovered, since her enlargement from that worse than prison, where her poor mind was fettered, though her limbs were free— And I have great hopes, from the calm state in which she now appears, of her recovery. — She has really an extraordinary

nary understanding, allowing for her youth and inexperience; and from that, I trust, that she will be able to conquer the tenderness she formerly felt for the most worthless of his sex.

She is to set out this night for Corke, where she is consigned to the care of an eminent merchant, a particular friend of Lucy Leister's, who will ensure her a passage in one of the best ships that sails from thence to Bristol.—On her arrival there, she is to be put into the care of Benson's niece, who is married to a stationer, and is commanded by her aunt to attend her up to London, and lodge her safe under your kind protection. One of farmer Wilson's daughters goes with her, to attend the little Olivia—The girl has lived in some creditable families,
and

64 THE HISTORY OF

and is tolerably clever—Both Mrs. Walter and her lovely child have made an astonishing progress in learning English; they have capacities for every thing.

When the moment arrives of bidding her adieu, which it shortly must, I shall be sensible of a more mixed sensation than I have ever felt before; I know that I ought to rejoice at our separation, for her sake; but I cannot help being selfish enough to regret it, for my own.

Amazement falls infinitely short of what I felt, when I read the paragraph in your letter relative to Mrs. Colville! I am shocked as well as you at the train of ideas which obtruded themselves upon me, in consequence of her unnatural proposal — “ Alarmed about my brother!”

No,

No, Heaven forbid that I should ever think of him in such a light! He ever disliked, and he must now detest her— But Sir George is of a mild and gentle nature, not apt to give the reins to his resentments; his natural and acquired good breeding must prevent his speaking hardly of a woman who even pretends to love him; and the involuntary respect with which he is inspired for Delia's mother, must increase his restraint, and silence every sarcastical reflection.

Now for myself—I know not what to think about Lord Lucan; never was confusion equal to mine, at seeing him—this rendered me incapable of observing him; but Lucy, who was present at our interview, assured me there was nothing particular in his appearance, except the
paleness

66 THE HISTORY OF

paleness of his countenance, and his surprise at my manner, which I am sure must have been perfectly *distract*.

Why did he bring Miss Ashford here? She doubtless remarked the alteration in my behaviour; and I am perhaps, at this moment, the object of their ridicule.—I never saw her look so handsome as she did that evening—I suppose they will soon be married: I wish it was over, and that they were both gone to his seat in the North.

I have been extremely uneasy, these three days, about my little Harriet—she looks ill, and neither eats, or sleeps, yet will not allow that she is sick. I should certainly apprehend her being in love, if she had seen any object lately, that could have inspired her with that passion.

No,

No, my dear Fanny! my adventure at WALTERSBURGH was not a dream; yet I sometimes think with you, that Lord Lucan could never have been guilty of such an indecorum; tho' I do not now agree with you, that he is at all affected with any particular sentiment towards me. And I sincerely rejoice in dissenting from your opinion, on this subject.

By sending Mrs. Walter to you, I have barred my own hopes of seeing you in Ireland; and I, alas! have none of meeting you, in England—I cannot let this effort of generosity pass, without marking it, for perhaps it is the highest exertion of that virtue which I may ever have an opportunity of displaying.

I go now to bid adieu to your future charge — She will have the happiness of
seeing

68 THE HISTORY OF

seeing my Fanny, almost as soon as this can reach her hands.—An involuntary sigh has just escaped me! Down, selfish thoughts!

Farewell, my dear sister

L. BARTON.

LETTER XXXV.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

I Have received your letter, my Louisa, and I have also received your fair, your lovely friend! Mrs. Walter arrived in Dover-street last night—Prepared as I was, by your description, the extreme delicacy of her form surpassed my imagination—I can scarcely persuade myself that she is compounded of the same materials of which common mortals are made; at least I am certain that there
must

must be as much difference, as there is between the clay of which the finest porcelain is formed, and that which makes the coarsest earthen-ware.

I am sorry to say the simile is strengthened by an appearance of extreme fragility and weakness, which alarms one's tenderness into a kind of apprehension for her safety, every moment; and is, in my mind infinitely more interesting, than the most healthful glow of beauty in its highest bloom—I am sure if I were a man, I should be in love with her, and of course miserable, for I could not help considering her but as a mere beauteous shadow, which a rough blast too quickly might dissolve—But though not a lover, I am determined to cherish this *fair idea*, and for that purpose I shall take lodgings

ings at Kensington Gravel-pits, tomorrow, for three weeks, or a month; as I do not think the season far enough advanced, to carry her to the Hot-wells, or venture her even so far as Cleveland-hall,

There is, as you have already observed, something uncommonly engaging in her manner of speaking; but her sentiments need no addition—I never heard such warm, yet elegant expressions of gratitude, as she used in speaking of you; her tears flowed fast while she uttered them. The little Olivia took her hand, and said, “Mamma, Lady Barton is so good, that I know it would grieve her to think she made you weep; for I am sure she meant to dry your tears.”

But Mrs. Walter is at this moment writing to you, I will therefore leave her
to

to express her own sentiments, which she will do much better than I can, because she feels more.

I am charmed with your scheme of an English protestant monastery, though I am much afraid that both you wrote, and I read, that passage in your letter, with too selfish feelings and reflections. The general idea of convents I am as much averse to as you are; and I am sure that none of those abroad, would be a proper retreat for our fair client—The strictness of their institutions, and the harshness of their discipline, would soon dispatch her to the region of saints. Besides, such a place would be as unfit for one in her state of mind, as well as of body—Need the already unhappy afflict themselves still further, with austerities?

There is a paragraph in your letter, which gives me infinite concern: my dear Louisa must no longer boast a heart quite free from love—She is, I am afraid, a stricken deer; but I will hope that the wound is not mortal, and that it may yet be healed, though not without a cicatrice.—Why!—Ask yourself, my sister, why all these apprehensions about Miss Ashford? Why is she to be married to Lord Lucan, merely because she came with him to visit you? And why should you suspect an amiable young woman of such mean malice, as, without provocation, to attempt to render you ridiculous?—These are not the genuine feelings of my Louisa's heart! the stings of jealousy have instilled its venom, and this passion has but two sources, pride and love.

I most

I most sincerely wish that Lord Lucan and Miss Ashford were married, and that they were gone to his lordship's seat in the North, or to any other point of the compass that may be most remote from the neighbourhood of Southfield.

I cannot help trembling for your happiness, Louisa—I well know that I have nothing else to fear for; but is not that sufficient! I have, with pain, long beheld your growing partiality for his lordship; yet I hoped, against the conviction of my own heart, which still overflows with tenderness for an unworthy object, that you would be able to conquer it—But let me here observe, Louisa, that our situations are so widely different, that the weakness which may in mine, not

only be pardoned, but pitied, becomes criminal in yours.

This you may possibly say, is hard measure; but as we were none of us in a condition to make terms for ourselves, before we came into the world, we must submit to those that this same world has imposed on us since; and believe me, that they who struggle least against those chains which custom has forged for our sex are least likely to feel their weight.

—The world is jealous of its rites; it haughtily resents, and harshly chastizes, the smallest breach of them; nor did I ever know a man or woman, who boasted that they despised its laws, and trusted to their own integrity, who were not soon severely punished by its contempt or censure.

So

So much by way of cenfor ; now let the friend and sister plead for the preservation of your peace, which cannot be maintained with loss of fame, though conscious innocence might plead your justification ever so strongly — Should your character happen to be impeached, from any misconduct of yours, remember that your husband has a right to resent your having forfeited the highest trust which manly confidence can commit to female delicacy, the preservation both of his honour and her own ! and that from that moment you must appear in the light of a criminal, towards him at least, tho' you stand ever so clear, with regard to yourself. How truly humiliating must such a situation be, to a mind like yours !

76 THE HISTORY OF

I have drawn this sad prospect in the strongest colours, in hopes that my Louisa will start from the brink of the precipice where she now stands, and instantly retreat into the gentle path of domestic happiness.—I am truly grieved that the roughness of Sir William's manners may render this walk less smooth and pleasing than it should be ; yet surely it is easier to tread on pebbles than on thorns ! And with the latter we shall certainly find those ways strewed, that lead from the road which Providence has marked out for us.

I should detest myself if I were able to add another line on this subject, yet I hope that my tears have not so much blotted what I have already written, as to prevent your reading it.

Mrs.

LADY BARTON. 77

Mrs. Walter is determined to write to her husband, and I think her right in it, for some of the reasons given above; though Heaven knows she owes him no compliment, nor scarcely duty — She shall not, however, if I can prevent her, write for some days, as it must hurry her poor weak spirits, which want much to be recruited.

I have not heard from my brother,
for some time. Adieu,

my ever dear Louisa,

F. CLEVELAND.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

Lord HUME to Lord LUCAN.

IF I were not perfectly convinced of the fallacy of judicial astrology, I should fancy you were a conjurer, Lucan; and that you had calculated Margarita's nativity—How else could you, at such a distance, discover that she was compounded of art; while I, who saw her every day, and all the day, was so thoroughly hoodwinked by her beauty, as to imagine her mind as faultless as her form! What a numscull! what a coxcomb have I been? She had cunning enough to persuade, and I folly enough to believe, that she loved me to distraction—For the rest of my life I shall consider

sider myself as an idiot; though you are to take notice, that I will not be called so, even by you — But the worst of it is that I am a ruined fool too. — Don't laugh, Lucan; I shall be ready to cut your throat if you do; but I know you will not, when I tell you that I am severely hurt.

In my last I acquainted you, that I had lost a large sum at play, and was waiting at Venice for remittances, which arrived in a few days—Margarita had a mind, as she said, that we should quit Venice with a coup d'eclat, and prevailed on me to hire jewels, to the amount of two thousand pounds, to ornament herself on the last night of our appearance at the carnival. I readily complied with her request, though I had before laid

80 THE HISTORY OF

out very near that sum in the same sort of trumpery for her.

She looked like an angel when she was dressed, that I must acknowledge; and I never once thought of searching for the cloven foot, beneath such a dazzling brightness.

We went together to the masquerade, and with us a man she called her brother, whom I have since discovered to be her galant, and a notorious sharper. I soon engaged at play—fortune favoured me, for a time; but before the conclusion of the night, she was at her old tricks again, and I lost five-hundred guineas.

The agitation, naturally attendant on the vicissitudes of play, had taken off
my

my attention, even from Margarita, so that I felt no anxiety at not having seen her for several hours. It was very late when I went home ; and judge of my amazement when I was told she had not returned, from the time we set out together—I flew back again into the street, and ran, like a distracted man, into every house that was open ; but the company were retired from every place, and I could find no trace of her.

I will not pretend to give you an idea of my situation, for I can now hardly recollect the state of my mind at that time, much less describe it.—About nine o'clock in the morning, a Mendicant friar brought a letter to my door, in which were contained these words.

To Lord HUME.

I intreat you, my dear lord, and quondam lover, not to be uneasy on my account; I am well, and happy; and before this can reach you, shall be out of the Venetian dominions; all search after me will be in vain. I should not have quitted you so abruptly, if I had not discovered that my staying with you would have been an injury to your fortune, which I imagine is already much hurt — But you Englishmen can always repair such damages by marriage.—I have therefore removed the only obstacle to the amendment of your circumstances, by tearing myself from you; and do now most seriously recommend it to you, to return to your own country, and avail yourself of this last resource.

Those trifles of yours which I have taken with me, I shall still preserve as tokens of your liberality, which is allowed to be the national virtue of the English: and I shall ever remain your Lordship's much obliged,

and obedient servant

' M. DEL STRAZZI.'

The reading of this letter intirely conquered every passion of my mind, but rage; and I think I could at that moment, have strangled the insolent gypsy who wrote it—But I was not suffered to brood over it long; for the Jew, from whom I had hired the jewels, came to demand them.—I knew not what to do; I had settled with my banker the day before, and as I intended leaving Venice, I had withdrawn my letter of credit, and had

not half so much cash as would answer the Israelite's demand.— Lord Stormont happened luckily to come in, to pay me a visit; I frankly told him my distress, and he kindly lent me a draft on his banker, which satisfied old Shylock.

I wrote on the instant to my agent, to cut down a wood that was planted, for ought I know, by my great-grandfather; and thus my good tall oaks, that have been at least fourscore years growing, have vanished into the hands of Jews, and jades, for one night's no-diversion at the carnival.

Indeed, Lucan, I begin to think that we English are very silly fellows. But why should I lump my countrymen, when I am really convinced that there is not
such

such another noodle in the world, as myself?

How go on your love affairs? They can't be in such a desperate state as mine. — Our countrywomen have not spirit enough to strike such a stroke as my Diàvoleffa has done, and I now begin to think that a man had better be contented with the wholesome home-brewed beer of old England, than pay too dear for Tokay.

Now I talk of England, I should like very well to return there, if I were not ashamed to see Fanny Cleveland, and afraid of being laughed at by my old friends at Almac's, and Boodle's, and in short every where. — Do, my dear Lucan, tell me what I shall do with myself?

for

for I am at present the most desolate, as well as desultory of mortals.—But in all states I shall continue affectionately yours,

HUME.

LETTER XXXVII.

LORD LUCAN to LORD HUME.

My dear Hume,

AS you have made it a point, I will not laugh at what you seem to consider as a misfortune, but you must permit me to say, that I have not received so much pleasure, for a long time, as from your account of Margarita's elopement.—Believe me, my friend, you have got cheaply off, even with the loss of some thousands—Character is of infinitely more value than fortune—But I am persuaded

persuaded that both yours would have been totally ruined, had you continued much longer connected with that most infamous and artful woman.

There is nothing so very particular in your adventure, as to make you apprehend yourself peculiarly ridiculous; for I will take upon me to say, that there is not one in ten of our countrymen, that has made the same tour which you have done, who has not been duped by some "Jay of Italy." — Don't publish the story yourself, and others will be cautious how they mention it to you.—I will also venture to promise that Miss Cleveland has too much delicacy herself, to wound yours, though I have not the honour of knowing her.

If

If you have no other objections but those I have alluded to, and which I have sufficiently obviated, I would, by all means, wish you to return immediately to England.—But pr'ythee why, my dear Hume, have you made a comparison so extremely injurious to our fair countrywomen? whose beauty, is at least the boast of Europe; nor do I believe that either Georgia, or the Grecian isles, can produce any thing that surpasses them, in loveliness or elegance of form: your home-brewed beer was a simile for a porter, or at best for a mere hunting 'squire.

I am firmly persuaded, from this instance, that you have conversed more with Englishmen than foreigners, since you have been on the continent—This is
one

one of the unpardonable absurdities common to our nation.—We go, or are sent abroad, by our friends—I had almost said our *enemies*—at great expence; and then, instead of informing ourselves of the manners and police of the places we are in, our first pursuit is to find out our countrymen, and herd with them continually, merely because they are so; by which conduct we contrive still to retain those prejudices we should have left at home, and cultivate only the follies and vices we meet with abroad.

But a truce with reflections of every kind: and in answer to your query, with regard to the situation of my heart, I can with truth assure you, that it is infinitely more wretched than your own.—I never had the least reason to flatter myself

self with the most distant idea of being beloved by the object of my passion, yet had my vanity inspired me with the fond hope of having obtained some small share in her friendship and esteem—How I have forfeited this blessing I know not; but it now is fled, my friend, and with it all my happiness.

I have been, for some time past, at the seat of Sir Arthur Ashford; you must remember him at college; he has a sister, who is both handsome and agreeable; and had I a disengaged heart, I know no woman to whom I would sooner offer my hand—But never shall I be guilty of such baseness, as to defraud an innocent and amiable woman of her affections, while, like a wretched bankrupt, I have not an equivalent to make.

The

LADY BARTON. 91

The circumstance of Miss Ashford's living with her brother, will prevent my spending as much of my time with him as I could wish.—The world will be apt to suppose that her attractions might have drawn me thither, and this may possibly prevent a real and deserving lover from making his addresses there—I will, therefore, speedily retire to my own seat, to solitude and sorrow.

You are incapable of forming any idea of the charming, delicate, but distracted situation of my mind—May happier days be yours! Adieu,

my friend,

LUCAN.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Southfield.

YES, Fanny, I confess it! you have searched my bosom, and found the arrow rankling in my heart! Too cruel sister! better, sure far better, that you had remained ignorant of my disease, unless you can prescribe a cure! I now detest myself; and all that generous confidence, which is the true result and firm support of real virtue, is for ever fled! I shrink even from the mild eye of friendship—The tender, the affectionate looks of Harriet and Lucy, now distress me! How then shall I endure the stern expression of contempt and rage, from an offended husband's angry brow! There is but one thing
that

that could be more dreadful—I mean his kindness—That alone could add new horrors to my wretched state, and make me feel the humiliating situation of a criminal still more than I now do.

I am, I am a criminal! Alas! you know not to what degree I am so! But I will tell you all, lay bare my heart before you, and beg you not to soothe, but probe its wounds.

At about a quarter of a mile from our house, there is an octagon temple, which overlooks a fine piece of water, adjoining to which there is a beautiful and extensive wood; this room then, I have fitted up in a very elegant taste, as a small library, or museum, for myself, and it is intirely devoted to my hours of retire-

retirement—Here I read, write, draw, or ruminatè. In this spot, on the day after I last wrote to you, was I sitting and musing, I will confess it, on the happiness which might have been my portion, had I happened to have met Lord Lucan before I was Sir William Barton's wife.

The tears streamed insensibly from my eyes, and so much dimmèd my sight, as to make it doubtful whether the figure I then saw of Lord Lucan, walking by the canal, was real, or visionary—I rose immediately to the window, and perceived it to be him.

He came slowly on, gazing intently on a miniature picture, which he sometimes pressed to his lips, and sometimes held at a distance, as if to place it in different

ferent points of view. Blushing, I own it, Fanny, I felt the pangs of jealousy; I doubted not but it was Miss Ashford's picture, and instantly detested the original—How unworthy, how unjust, do I now appear, in my own sight!

My feet became as much rivetted to the place where I stood, as Lord Lucan's eyes were to the picture—He saw me not, till he came close to the window, and then, in the utmost confusion, snipt the portrait into his pocket.

He came into the temple, covered with blushes, made a thousand apologies for having intruded upon my retirement, though he said he had come on purpose to take his leave, as he meant to quit Sir Arthur Ashford's, and set out for his own seat, the next day.

With

96 THE HISTORY OF

With more pique than prudence, I told him that I was surprised at his having resolution sufficient to tear himself from a person, whose picture was so dear to him as I supposed that to be, to which I had seen him pay his adorations, when I fancied he might have the original as a companion for life, if he chose it.

I never saw surprise so strongly painted, as in his countenance—His voice faltered while he replied, “Were that possible, madam, I should be the happiest man alive—But, alas! there is a bar, an insuperable bar, which cannot be surmounted! therefore, madam, do I tear myself from the too lovely object of a despairing passion.”

I was very near as much confused as Lord Lucan, and, without knowing what I said, replied, "I pity you, my Lord, "and am truly sorry."—At that instant, he in an extacy, exclaimed, O stop! most honoured! most beloved of women! nor raise my transports to that dangerous height, which may exceed to madness! yet, yet again repeat the charming sound! and by your pity overpay my sufferings.

It was impossible for anyone, not quite an idiot, to misunderstand this declaration—Yet was I absurd enough to seem ignorant of his meaning, and answered that I did not conceive of what use my pity could be to him, as I could not hope to have more influence on Miss Ashford, than himself.

He started from his seat, and, with a look that seemed to pierce through all my little artifice, cried out “Miss Ashford, Madam! how is it her concern? “Surely, my Lord, I replied, I thought it “was that Lady’s picture, with which “you seemed so much delighted, as you “walked along.”

He gazed on me again with earnestness, as he would read my thoughts, and then with downcast looks, as speaking to himself, he said—“It must be so! that “form, that angel form, cannot deceive, “and my temerity is yet a secret—It “shall remain so; for I will fly, for ever, “from her sight.”

He turned away his face, to hide his tears; and had I suffered our conversation to have ended there, I had been far less
guilty

guilty than I am.—But vanity, that bane of female virtue, led me on, to tell him that I could not be satisfied, without a farther explanation on this subject; and that, as he had declared Miss Ashford was not the object of his passion, I hoped he could have no objection to shewing me the picture of a person, whom, in all probability, I neither did, nor possibly might ever know.

He looked at me then, with a countenance more solemn than I had ever seen him wear: I blushed excessively, from a consciousness of my own insincerity; he saw into my thoughts, and, with a firm, and yet affecting manner, spoke thus.

“Do not, for your own sake, Madam,
“extend the cruelty of your triumph be-

“ yond my demerits, nor wantonly sport
“ with the miseries of one, whom you have,
“ though innocently, rendered wretched.
“ Nature formed you in her most perfect
“ model, and gave me susceptibility to ad-
“ mire those charms, which, to my endless
“ grief, were then devoted to another.—I
“ sought, not Madam, to invade his right,
“ or soil the purity of your fair bosom,
“ with one improper thought. Your friend-
“ ship, your esteem, I wished to gain ; and
“ for that purpose kept my love concealed.
“ Chance only has revealed it—How am
“ I to blame ? or wherefore should I now
“ become the object of your hatred, or
“ contempt ? Your pity was the sole indul-
“ gence I ever should have dared to have
“ solicited and that you might, without a
“ crime, have bestowed. The wildness of my
“ passion flattered my fond hopes that you
“ had

“ had just now granted it—Judge of its
 “ value by my transports, Madam—But
 “ you recal the precious gift; and all that
 “ I now dare presume to ask, is your for-
 “ giveness; allow me that, and never
 “ more shall the unhappy Lucan offend
 “ your eyes, or feast his own, with gazing
 “ on your charms.”

Tears stopped his utterance—O, Fan-
 ny! was it possible that my eyes should
 be dry? they streamed too surely—I con-
 fess my weakness—At that moment my
 heart first felt the luxury of tears—The
 soft effusion flowed from pity, from ten-
 derness, from — dare I pronounce it,
 love!

The emotion he discovered at seeing
 me weep, was quite extravagant—He

threw himself at my feet, snatched my hand, and pressed it to his lips, and vowed he would never rise till I pronounced his pardon. At that instant, I heard the sound of voices that approached us, and exclaimed, "Rise, my Lord, I pardon, and I pity you."

He had scarce time to obey me, before Colonel Walter, Lucy, and Harriet entered the temple — The apparent confusion, both of Lord Lucan's looks, and mine, with the tears that still trembled in our eyes, was but too visible to pass unnoticed; Lucy appeared surprised at the sight of Lord Lucan, Harriet's face was covered with blushes, and the Colonel, by a malignant smile, shewed that he enjoyed our distress.

He

He presented me with a letter from Sir William, whom he had left in Dublin, and said he hoped that would plead his excuse, for having interrupted what he thought the most agreeable party in the world, a sentimental *tête à tête*; and turning briskly to Lord Lucan, asked him if he had been relating the melancholy story of Eloise and Abelard, or the more disastrous loves of Hero and Leander?

Pique now got the better of my confusion, and, without waiting for Lord Lucan's reply, I answered, that we need not go so far back, for melancholy tales; for that I was acquainted with some persons now living, whose sufferings far exceeded those of the unfortunate ladies he had mentioned. He turned his piercing eyes quick upon me, at these words,

and for the first time of his life, I believe, blushed.

O, Fanny, what an indiscreet, and consequently unhappy wretch, is your sister! Thank Heaven, Mrs. Walter is out of his reach! But have I not, by this unguarded speech, betrayed the secret to her tyrant! I never shall forgive myself.

My Lucy, ever kind and attentive to her now unworthy friend, relieved us all from our embarrassment, by rendering the conversation general, and proposed our returning to the house, as there was hardly time for me to dress, before dinner; and added, that she would either endeavour to entertain the gentlemen at the harpsichord, or engage with them at billiards.

We

We then all set out, seemingly at ease—But who can read the human heart, or the various springs that actuate its movements! Mine, wretched as it is, had then received a hateful guest, unknown to it before! Consciousness of having erred! its sure attendants, fear, and shame, now followed close, and when I reached my toilet, and viewed my shadow in the glass, my colour varied, as these passions worked, and I became alternate red and pale.

Poor Benson saw the effect, without the cause, and was alarmed—She would have got me drops, which I refused: sick, sick at heart I was, but where is the medicine that can abate its conflicts! Lethe! O for a draught of it!—A shower of tears somewhat relieved me; I read

106 THE HISTORY OF

Sir William's letter; cruellest of husband's! it was the kindest that he had ever wrote, since he obtained that title! He will return to Southfield, in a few days — How shall I look upon him, Fanny?

I cannot now go on, my next shall tell you all.

L. BARTON.

P. S. I have read Mrs. Walter's letter, and yours; but am at present incapable of answering either.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIX.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Southfield.

AMIDST the variety of disagreeable thoughts which had disturbed me, curiosity asserted its rights in a female breast, and increased my uneasiness, by a wish to know how Lord Lucan had obtained my picture.—I never had but two miniatures taken of me; one, in my happy days, for my dear Fanny; and a second, last winter, in Dublin, at the earnest request of my niece, soon after she came to live with us.—It was impossible that he should be in possession of the first, and a train of very unpleasant ideas succeeded to the thought of Harriet's having given him the latter.

I sent for her directly—When she came into my dressing-room, I perceived she had been weeping, and I also perceived my picture on her arm—This put a stop to the inquiry I had designed to make ; and by way of saying something, I asked her where Lord Lucan was ? She said she had just then left him in Sir William's library.

My curiosity was again raised to know the cause of Harriet's tears ; I could not ask her—But my heart informed me—She loves Lord Lucan.—Unhappy girl ! yet still far happier than I ! she may, without a blush, avow her passion ; while mine must cover me with endless shame.

Yet wherefore should there be this false distinction ? If passion is involuntary,

it cannot be criminal ; 'tis consequences only that can make it so ; and Harriet and Louisa both may love, with innocence.—

Flattering sophistry ! Alas ! I would deceive myself, but cannot ! Have I not vowed, even at the altar vowed, to love another ? Yet can that vow be binding, which promises what is not in our power, even at the time we make it ? But grant it were, the contract sure is mutual ; and when one fails, the other should be free.

Wretched Louisa ! strive no more to varnish o'er thy faults—Thou wert a criminal, in the first act, who wedded without love ; and all the miseries which proceed from thence, too justly are thy due.

Yes,

Yes, Fanny, I will take your counsel, and will patiently submit to those corrosive chains, which I myself have riveted; I will not murmur, but I must complain to you, and you alone, my friend, my sister! Desert me not, while I deserve your pity, and I will still endeavour to deserve it!

Lord Lucan is gone! My intreaties have prevailed, he returns not to Ashpark, or Southfield, any more.—Do not congratulate me on this imaginary triumph; I have bought the concession but too dear—I have avowed my love! Do not detest me, Fanny! I saw no other way to secure my virtue—By confessing my passion, I have put it out of my power ever to see, or converse with the object of it more—He is banished for ever from
my

LADY BARTON. III

my sight — What would my sister, or what the rigid world, have more!

With infinite difficulty I discovered that the innocent and undesigning Harriet had lent him my picture, and he sent off his servant to France, to get it copied, who returned with it to Ash-park, on the day I first saw it in his hand.

I shall never take notice of this affair, to her, as I too well know how difficult it must be to refuse the request of one we love—But surely his making this request must have severely pained her tender heart — Sweet, gentle innocent! I most sincerely pity her distress.

The detestable Colonel Walter stays with us still, though unasked—I think
he

he looks with prying eyes, on all my actions; yet what are they to him? He has no friendship, either for Sir William, for me, or any one else.—Cruel consciousness that compelled me to banish Lord Lucan, and suffer Colonel Walter to remain in my house! Have I not, Fanny, sufficiently sacrificed to forms and scruples?

I have this moment received a letter from Sir William; business detains him for a month longer in town—I rejoice, for his sake, as much as my own; as I hope I shall recover a greater degree of composure, than I am at present mistress of, by the time he returns.

I detest dissimulation, yet as Lucilla says, “Dissembling may for once be
“virtuous,”

“ virtuous,”* at least so far as to conceal that fault which cannot now be prevented—Yet trust me, Sir William, trust me, my honoured brother, and beloved sister, no stain shall ever rest upon your names, from my misconduct! I only ought, and I alone will suffer—My vow is passed to heaven, and to you.

This unhappy subject has so totally engrossed my thoughts, that I find it impossible to think of any other; excuse me, therefore, to our amiable friend, Mrs. Walter; embrace her, and kiss the young Olivia, for me. Tell me of all your healths, and happiness, which will supply some to your ever

affectionate sister,

L. BARTON.

* The Fair Penitent.

P. S.

P. S. The Colonel has never taken the least notice of the suspicious appearances in the temple—He has informed us, that his intended match with Mrs. Layton is quite off; seems perfectly gay and alert, and appears inclined to pay his addresses to Miss Ashford.—I have injured her, without design; but should he have the least chance to succeed there, I will atone the injury I have done her, by preventing the connection.

Lucy sets off this moment—An express from her lover, who lies dangerously ill in Dublin, hurries her away—She is distracted—I envy her distraction—She may to all the world declare her grief, her love, for the deserving Creswell!

L E T.

LETTER XL.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

INDEED, my Louisa, your two last letters have afflicted me beyond measure: my heart bleeds for your sufferings, yet reason and virtue both forbid my endeavouring to soothe your grief, or stop your flowing tears, unless I could remove the cause from whence they spring—That, alas! can only be hoped for, from the lenient hand of time, and your own fortitude.

I know how very difficult it is to enter so far into another person's situation, as is necessary to judge their actions with candor; we must first feel and think as they do, before it can become possible

—I

116 THE HISTORY OF

—I have, therefore, endeavoured by a thorough recollection of your temper and sentiments, joined to the similitude of our natures, to put myself as it were in your place, in order to be able, with justice and precision, to give my opinion freely, both with regard to your past and future conduct.

I will now venture to tell you that the source of your present unhappiness is to be traced much higher than the æra you date it from, your marriage with Sir William Barton—Though I admit your own confession, that your first fault was committed then—It must be the joining of hearts, not hands, that can insure the marriage *rights*—I don't mispell the word*—And the woman who stretches out an *empty hand*, at the altar,

* Alluding to the word *rites*.

but

but mocks the institution; and, if I may hazard the boldness of the expression, becomes *guilty*, before her *crime*; receives an antepast of misery, “And puts her
“trust in miracles, for safety.”

But the partiality of our ever dear and respected parents, sowed the first seeds of vanity, in my Louisa's mind; they lived not long enough to be alarmed at its growth, and to eradicate the poisonous weed—By their death, you became your own mistress, at an age when self-applause is predominant, in every female breast — Young, beautiful, rich, and accomplished, how was it possible you should escape the snares of flattery? They twined about your heart; and I have great reason now to believe, and lament, that the envied preference you
gave

gave to Sir William Barton, by becoming his wife, was owing more to his having persevered longer than the rest of your admirers, in his attentions and attendance on you, than to that just selection, which should be the reward of distinguished merit, and in which both love and esteem should happily unite.

At the time of your marriage, I had made but very slight observations on the matrimonial state, and therefore did not doubt, that though you declared yourself insensible of any passion for Sir William, you might be perfectly happy with him, all the days of your life—I am now convinced of the fallacy of this opinion, as well as of the imprudence of the declaration you then too openly and unguardedly made.

LADY BARTON. 119

Believe me, Louisa, that this was the first thing that soured your husband's temper—Men are naturally proud and jealous; they do not easily brook disappointments, or mortifications; a hopeless pursuit must be attended with both—We are not then to wonder either at Sir William's declining it, or resenting his ill success.

In a former letter you say, that “had Sir William continued to solicit your affections a little longer, they would have been all his.” You know not that, Louisa; your vanity was flattered by the assiduities of a lover, and your pride revolted at the authority of a husband—Neither of these sentiments have anything to do with passion—Had you loved the man you married, you would have wished

to preserve his affection, without being vain of it; and had you seen it declining, you would have tried every means to recover it, without considering how much your pride would be hurt by its loss.

There are, I am convinced, abundance of ingredients necessary to form an happy union for life; but love is, in my opinion, of all others the most necessary—Like the sun, it not only brightens and gilds every amiable quality of the beloved object, but draws forth every latent virtue in our hearts, and excites us to become as perfect as we can, in order to merit that affection which constitutes our true happiness.

Milton seems to be of my opinion, when he makes the first of lovers, and of men, say thus to Eve,—

“ I from

- " I from the influence of thy looks receive
- " Access in every virtue, in thy sight
- " More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
- " Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
- " Shame to be overcome, or over-reached,
- " Would utmost vigor raise, and raised unite."

I know not why, or how I have launched out into this dissertation upon matrimony, unless it be that I wish to avoid the painful subject of your last letters, and yet cannot turn my thoughts upon any thing quite foreign to it—I think I ought, at least, to acknowledge that I am pleased with the resolution you have shewn in banishing Lord Lucan; and the delicacy of your motive for confessing your passion to him, is the only possible excuse that can be urged for such an hazardous impropriety.

But let me now hope that my dear Louisa's virtue will soon enable her to

rise above the want of an apology, and that a proper consciousness of what she owes to herself, will assist her to triumph over that unhappy weakness, which she so pathetically describes, as the harbinger of fear and shame—Hateful, destructive passions! O be they banished far from every generous breast! and, in their room, may hope and joy expand my sister's heart!

Mrs. Walter's health continues extremely delicate; the physicians, who attend her, give me hopes that she may recover, though slowly—If it were not for that sweet promiser Hope, I should at this moment be the most wretched of mortals, for at this moment every creature that I truly love, is unhappy—Can I then be otherwise? I should be sorry if I could.

My

My brother has given his final negative to Mrs. Colville's proposal: on her account he will not stay longer in Paris; and on his own, he will not return to England—He intends to cross the Alps, in pursuit of amusement—May he find that, and every thing else he wishes!

Adieu,

my beloved Louisa,

F. CLEVELAND.

G 2

L E T-

LETTER XLI.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Southfield.

“ Then all the boasted office of thy friendship,
“ Was but to tell Louisa, what a wretch she is:
“ Alas! What need that?”

I Cannot help saying, Fanny, that these lines seem but too applicable to your last letter. When I poured forth the anguish of my breaking heart before you, had I not a right to expect that my friend and sister would have spoken peace to its sorrows, and poured wine and oil on its wounds? You tell me that “ reason and virtue forbid these “ tender offices, in my unhappy case.” Are reason and virtue, then, at war with wretchedness? And must guilt be always

ways connected with misery? Or is it, can it be true, that misfortunes loosen the ties of blood as well as friendship, and leave the wretch infected by them, to be hurried down the stream of life, at the mercy of their own wild passions, more destructive far than raging winds and seas!

Forgive me, Fanny, for this horrid thought! I know your heart is generous and good, and that you did not mean to add to my distress—Nay, I am certain that each wound you gave, was doubly felt by you—Yet why, my sister, should you think it necessary to deal severely with me? If, as you seem to think, vanity is my predominant foible, why did not my fair philosopher find out its use, and play it off against my

present weakness? We should never humble that heart too much, which we have any hopes of reclaiming.

When we become completely vile in our own sight, we have but little reason to hope for the good opinion of others, which, I much fear, is one of our strongest incitements to virtue; and when, as you have before observed, we are totally indifferent to what the world thinks of us, we too generally not only meet, but deserve, its censure and contempt.

A woman still, my Fanny, under all my distresses, I am inclined to justify the foible you hint at; nay more, to prove that it approaches to the very province of virtue; as it is at least capable of rousing it to action, and sometimes of assisting its operations.

“ Ref-

“Respect thyself” is certainly one of the best tenets, that has ever been conveyed to us—Yet surely it favours a little of *l’amour propre*; which term, though exactly translated by the words, *self love*, conveys yet a different idea to my mind, and appears to have somewhat more of the lightness of vanity, than of a self-applause, in material matters.

Bravo! Louisa! How admirably have you trifled through this page, on a subject absolutely foreign to your heart? But has not my Fanny set me the example? And shall I not endeavour to imitate her? Alas! like all other copyists, I fall short of the original, for if I write on, I shall again recur to the sad source of all my sorrows,

“Again indulge the woman in my soul,

“And give a loose to tears, and to complainings.”

For your sake, then, my Fanny, I will restrain my pen, and suffer this letter to reach your hands, free from the severe tax which has been too often imposed on you, by my late correspondence, "For indeed I am not merry, but do beguile the thing I am, by seeming otherwise."

I am running into quotations; but they are natural to a disturbed mind; as persons in such a state would rather use any body's sense, than their own—For whatever can divert the mind, or turn it from its own reflections, must be a point gained from misery. Therefore do I endeavour thus to sport, I find, in vain; for laughter without mirth, is but hysterical, and may end in tears.

My sincerest good wishes attend Mrs. Walter, and I may venture to add, that
I am

I am both to her, and you, much more
than to myself,

an affectionate friend,

L. BARTON.

LETTER XLII.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

I Might with great truth and justice re-
ply to the lemma of my dear Louisa's
letter, by quoting the words that follow
it, in the original; * but though I may
not express myself as elegantly as Mr.
Rowe, I will trust my defence to the
feelings of my heart, on a subject where
it is so truly interested.

* "O! rather say,
"I came to tell her how she might be happy!
"To soothe the secret anguish of her soul,
"To comfort that fair mourner! That forlorn one!
"And teach her steps to know the paths of peace!"

Fair Penitent.

If soothing could alleviate your sufferings, my pen should be taken from the cygnet's wing, and dipped in the honey of Hybla! But alas! my sister, yours is a disease that will increase by indulgence, and which severity alone can cure!

There have been instances where the hand of a surgeon has trembled, from a consciousness of the misery he was obliged to inflict on his patient.

Judge then how unsteadily I now hold the pen that is to wound the heart of my Louisa, by telling her that I fear she has committed an almost irreparable error?

I have already told you that it is long since I with grief beheld your partiality
for

for Lord Lucan; but from the idea which you taught me to form of him, and from my thorough knowlege of the delicacy and propriety of your sentiments, joined to your situation, I had lulled myself into a perfect security, that Lord Lucan would never dare to insult the wife of Sir William Barton, with a declaration of his passion; and that finding it intirely hopeless, he would either conquer or transfer it to some other object, from whom he might reasonably expect a proper return.

Such an attachment as Lord Lucan's be may compared to winter plants, which, by the aid of hot-houses, are rendered capable of producing summer fruits, but must decay and die without such artificial aid. Hope is the nurse of

love—without it, I am certain it cannot long exist, even in the most romantic bosom.

Can I then consider my Louisa's conduct as blameless, when I find Lord Lucan has avowed his passion? But what is the sentence which you would have pronounced, twelve months ago, upon a married woman who had declared that passion to be mutual? *Guilty, guilty upon honour!* *

You have still candour enough to judge yourself as severely, as you could any one else; you acknowledge yourself a criminal; but whither are your candor, and your judgment both fled, when you endeavour to derive merit from what you

* See Letter XXXIII. p. 60.

allow to be a crime, and say, that " You
" confessed your passion, to preserve
" your virtue ? "

I begin to be extremely apprehensive that reason is a very useless property to man, and can seldom do more than direct our choice, in things that are merely indifferent to us. Apathy is not natural to the human mind ; and yet from the moment our passions begin to operate with any degree of vigour, that same boasted reason, which philosophers tell us supplies its place, by controuling their emotions, and directing their pursuits, not only becomes instantly subservient to them, but meanly condescends to enter into the defence of their most pernicious consequences, and readily engages in the pleasing, but baneful office, of assisting us to impose upon ourselves.

This

This is, and must be true—At least I wish to think so; for I would much rather attribute my Louisa's errors to the general defects of our nature, than account for them by supposing any particular weakness, either in her reason, or her virtue—And surely she must herself acknowledge a failure in that judgment, that can be persuaded we may set bounds to the encroachments of a lover, by telling him that he is beloved!

Alas, Louisa! Lord Lucan is not *banished from Ash-park, from Southfield, from your sight, for ever!* But both the world, and I, without being over rigid, have a right to expect that he should no more be permitted to plead his passion, or avail himself of yours.

If you should be inclined to dispute the authority which demands this sacrifice,
let

let me remind you that there is one, who has an undoubted right to claim it; let your honour then make a willing sacrifice of all future connection with Lord Lucan, as the only atonement you can now make for the injury you have done Sir William Barton.

By this means, and this alone, you may again recover your happiness; for I know you too well to suppose that it can ever be compatible with a consciousness of continuing to act in opposition to the strictest rectitude—I know too, that you have strength of mind sufficient to accomplish this arduous task; and that our mental, like our bodily strength, is increased and invigorated by use. That generous frankness, which is the genuine offspring of virtue, shall again reanimate my be-
8 loved

136 THE HISTORY OF

loved Louisa's face, the mild eye of friendship shall no longer be painful to her, and she shall endure the piercing look of inquiry from her husband's eyes, with soft, yet steady dignity.—O may my wishes be prophetic! Amen, Amen!

I will now venture to tell you that I am truly grieved for the young, the innocent, and amiable Harriet! My concern may possibly remind you of Swift's lines,

“Should some neighbour feel a pain,

“Just in the part where I complain,” &c.

I acknowledge the sympathy between us, and would do much to cure her malady.

She has, however, the advantage of me in every respect;—she is younger, and, of course, the impression which her

LADY BARTON. 137

heart has received is more likely be erased.—The letters we carve on saplings, wear out with their growth, while those that are imprinted on the perfect tree remain indelible.

Besides, it is by no means impossible that Lord Lucan may love her yet; for I repeat my opinion, that his passion for you is quite a sickly plant, which must necessarily perish, as I am perfectly convinced that you don't mean to cherish it longer.

For all these good and weighty reasons, I think she may hope, or, at least, I will do so for her, that, one way or other, her heart may be set at ease.—I am in a praying mood, and will say, amen! to this wish also.

I would

I would add another petition to those I have already made, if I hoped it would succeed; but I almost begin to despair of Mrs. Walter's recovery—She continues to languish, without any visible sign of amendment, and the physicians now think that the air of a more southern clime, is the only chance she has for life.

She has written to the good Pere Guillaume, to recommend her to a convent that will receive her and her child, as pensioners, and allow her the liberty of going out in a carriage, for exercise, which is absolutely necessary to her existence.

Were I only to consider myself, the pain I feel at the thought of parting
with

with this charming woman would tempt me to wish that I had never known her; but how amply am I recompensed for that, and a thousand other sufferings, by the delightful reflection of having rendered her mind perfectly tranquil, nay happy, by indulging myself in settling a small, but decent provision, on her darling child.

Can all the diamonds that ever issued from the Indian mines afford to their possessors that heart-felt glow of satisfaction I enjoyed, when I had perfected the deed which conveyed two thousand pounds into the hands of trustees, for the use of the young Olivia Walter?

I was so apprehensive that the strong emotions of the mother's gratitude,
might

might have affected her delicate frame, that I was almost tempted to conceal this matter from her ; yet I wished to remove every fear or doubt, which the weakness and languor of her spirits might suggest, with regard to her child's future fate.

I wrote her a few lines, to tell her what I had done ; and added, that I would debar myself from the pleasure of seeing her, till she should give me a promise under her hand, never to mention this business to me.

She promised, indeed, what was impossible for her to perform ; and, at our next interview, I was convinced, that, as the Peruvian princess says, “ To be
“ thoroughly generous, you must listen
“ to acknowledgments.”

I have

LADY BARTON. 141

I have promised, that if it should please Providence to call her to a state of bliss, I will immediately take the little Olivia under my care; and, if I live, I will most faithfully discharge the pleasing and important trust.

My spirits, not much elevated before, sink under the sad idea of Mrs. Walter's death.—I cannot at present say more, than that I am, with unabated tenderness,

Your truly affectionate sister,

F. CLEVELAND.

L E T;

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

SEEK no longer, my Fanny, to save me from the miseries which I have brought upon myself, but try, my sister, to secure your own peace, by devoting to oblivion, the memory of a wretch that seems marked for destruction.—I feel the snares of fate wound round me, and I but vainly struggle to escape the toils.

A little gleam of comfort had beamed upon me, from your last letter ;—the kindness of your wishes had raised an ardor in my mind, for their accomplishment, which amounted almost to a hope of success ; and I looked forward, with anxious desire, to some future æra, when
my

my happiness should confirm your prophecy.

In this temper of mind, I walked slowly and lonely along to the temple, which I have already mentioned to you ; and if now and then a few vagrant tears strayed down my cheeks I considered them as drops of salutary woe, and did not once wish to restrain the healthful current.—In fine, I may truly say, that many weeks have passed since my poor harrassed mind enjoyed so sweet a calm before.—When I had reached my little asylum, I re-read your letter, and found but one passage in it that gave me pain ; I will not now say which it was, for that anguish has been entirely absorbed in a far greater one.

I took up a pen to write to you, which instantly dropped from my hand, at the
fight

sight of Lord Lucan's portrait, which lay before me on the table.—By an involuntary motion I took up the picture, and, looking on it, exclaimed,—“It is too true, Louisa! *Lord Lucan is not banished from Southfield, from Ash-park, from my sight, for ever!*”—encroaching and presuming man! cou’dst thou not be content with that ideal likeness, which my too fond fancy had already traced upon my mind, but at the hazard of my reputation would obtrude this mimic resemblance on my sight.

While I pronounced these words, the door opened, and Colonel Walter stood before me.—I dropped the picture—he took it up,—seated himself by me, and addressed me in pretty near the same words

words, which Polydore uses, when he finds Monimia in tears.

I had just presence of mind enough to say, that I was not then disposed to play the fool.—He instantly assumed a more serious air, caught hold of my hand, and insolently declared a passion for me, which, he boasted, had commenced at the same moment with Lord Lucan's—That respect had hitherto kept him silent, till he found that his rival was likely to carry away the prize by his audacity, and that this alone had determined him to urge his equal attachment to me.

Surprise had hitherto kept me silent, grief now stopt my utterance.—I saw myself in the power of a wretch, whom I knew to be devoid of generosity or pi-

ty—I saw my ruin plain—I see it still!—it was in vain to deny my regard for Lord Lucan ;—the words which he had heard me utter, and the fatal picture which was then in his possession, were proofs incontrovertible.

My tears had no effect upon him—He pursued his brutal discourse, by saying that Lord Lucan was certainly more calculated for inspiring a romantic childish passion than himself, and that he most willingly resigned all the sentimental and platonic part of my affection to him, but that I had charms sufficient to render them both happy, which he hoped my prudence would incline me to, when I reflected that he was not the confident of my choice, and had therefore a right to expect that he should be bribed to secrecy.

I could contain my resentment no longer, but, with eyes sparkling with indignation, bad him fly that moment from my sight, and make whatever use his villainy might suggest, of the secret which his meanness and insolence had obtained—That I would rely for my justification from his malice, on my own innocence, and the candour of Sir William Barton, who should certainly be acquainted with the return he made to his friendship.

He replied, with the most insulting *froidueur*, that if Sir William had really a friendship for him, he would certainly give him a preference, in the purchase of a jewel, which he neither knew how to value or preserve, and in which he seemed to have nothing more at present than

a nominal property.—“ In short, Ma-
“ dam,” continued he, “ though I have
“ been a foldier, I am not so much in-
“ clined to cutting of throats, as to de-
“ liver you from Sir William’s tyran-
“ ny, merely to leave you at liberty to
“ bestow yourself on Lord Lucan ; but,
“ if you will condescend to make a con-
“ cession to the warmth of that passion
“ your charms have inspired me with, I
“ will protect you from your husband,
“ and the whole world beside, at the ha-
“ zard of my life and fortune.—In love,
“ at least, I am a Swift, and will not fight
“ without pay—Remember, Madam,
“ that you are much more in my power
“ than I am in yours, and that if you
“ should attempt to raise Sir William’s
“ resentment towards me, I can, with the
“ greatest ease, return it upon yourself—
“ This picture, Madam !”—

"Restore it, Sir, this moment."—
 "On certain terms, you may command
 "it, Madam."—"What are they?"—
 "Make me as happy as you have made
 "the original of it, and all my future
 "life shall be devoted to you."—"Hear
 "me, Sir, while I call Heaven to wit-
 "ness, that Lord Lucan never solicited
 "a criminal indulgence from me! and
 "that my heart has never yet admitted
 "a thought that could reflect dishonour
 "on my husband."

"Yet criminal to him, and Heaven,
 "I am, perhaps, for having yielded a
 "secret, though involuntary preference,
 "to another object.—The punishment of
 "this my greatest guilt, I now receive
 "from you; and if there be a spark of
 "honour or humanity remaining in your

150 THE HISTORY OF

“ breast, you will not only cease to persecute an unhappy woman, who has confessed her weakness to you, but convert the unworthy passion you have dared to urge, to pity—Alas! I dare not say, esteem!”

He was silent, I ventured to look up, and through the dim medium of my tears, I thought he seemed affected.—“ Charming! angelic tyrant! (he exclaimed) O were that tender weakness you have now avowed, but felt for me, how should I worship even that false delicacy, which deems it criminal—But it is deceitful all—Lord Lucan, Madam, has solicited.”—“ Never! never, Sir!”—“ Recal the morning scene, at Waltersburgh.”—Conviction flashed upon me, at the instant, and resentment hurried

hurried me beyond all tamer considerations.—“ I do, Sir; and am now convinced you were the person who then insulted me—You only could have had the presumption to attempt so base an outrage, and your knowing it, has now revealed the mystery; you were the audacious monster, who violated at once the laws of decency, and hospitality! would to Heaven my death had been the consequence! But let what will happen now, I will no longer hold a moment’s parley with you.”

I strove at that instant to rush out of the temple, but he prevented me, by seizing one of my hands, and saying, “ I plead guilty, Madam; but be assured I never should have made so daring an essay, but that I thought, in such a

“ situation, Lord Lucan might have suc-
 “ ceeded ; a thousand circumstances con-
 “ curred to make me think so ; I looked
 “ upon the straining of his leg as a con-
 “ trivance to excuse his going out with
 “ the rest of the hunters, that he might
 “ spend his time more happily with you
 “ —And had it been so, could you blame
 “ me, madam ? My love, my admira-
 “ tion are as strong as his.”

“ Detested love, detested admiration !”
 was all that I could utter.—“ I know
 “ it, Madam ?”—“ Then leave me, Sir,
 “ this moment.”—“ Not till you have
 “ pardoned a fault, for which I never
 “ can forgive myself, as it has distressed,
 “ or offended you.”—“ On one condi-
 “ tion I will pardon you, Sir, and on no
 “ other.” — “ Name it, Madam.” —
 “ That

“ That you shall never presume to hint
 “ your hateful passion more.”—“ Impof-
 “ sible ! as well not bid me breathe ! But
 “ let not your sentence be too severe, for
 “ I have terms to make, as well as you—
 “ Suppose that I—

At that instant I heard the footsteps
 of a person running towards the temple ;
 it was Harriet, who came to tell me that
 her uncle was arrived—“ Gracious Hea-
 “ ven ! (I exclaimed, in a low voice)
 “ What will become of me ?” The Co-
 lonel replied, in the same tone, “ Rely
 “ upon my friendship, and be happy.”
 —Harriet looked amazed ; but with the
 utmost tenderness begged that I would
 compose myself, as she was sure Sir Wil-
 liam would be shocked, were he to see
 my agitation.

“Not if he knew the cause,” said Colonel Walter. I stared upon him wildly; he proceeded, “Lady Barton has had a fall, and sprained her ankle, the shock has hurried her spirits, and I was this moment going to the house, to order the cabriolet to bring her home.”

Harriet looked as if she doubted, but took the hint, and said, “you had best do so, Sir, and let my uncle know of the accident, as it will account for my aunt’s delay.”—I was silent; yet sure my situation was truly pitiable, in being reduced to the sad dilemma, either of joining in a deceit with a person whom I detested, or of exposing myself to the prying eyes of my husband, under such circumstances as must alarm him, and call for explanation.

The

The Colonel then turned to me, and said, "Is it your pleasure, Madam, that I should go?"—"Yes! yes!" was all that I could utter, and the moment he was gone, burst again into a passion of tears; upon which Harriet cried out, "Why is not Lucy here? I have no influence upon my aunt, I am not worthy to advise."

"You are, you are, my dear, what would you have me do?"—"Have pity on Sir William, and yourself, and try to calm your spirits; for sure he never will believe they could be ruffled thus, by so slight an accident. —Believe me, Madam, I would lay down my life, to make you happy, though that is but a small compliment, for it is of very little value to myself."

She turned aside, to hide a starting tear
 —I clasped her to my breast, and said,
 “Do not, my Harriet, add to my dis-
 tress, by suffering me to think you are
 “unhappy.”

Sir William and the cabriolet came
 together; he embraced me very affec-
 tionately, and rallied me on my coward-
 ice in being so affected by my fall;
 wanted much to see my ankle, which I
 declined, took me up in his arms, and
 seated me in the chair, walked by my
 side, till we got to the house, and again
 lifted me out of it into my dressing-
 room.

O think, my sister! what I then endured!
 But you can never know it; deceit has
 ever been a stranger to your heart, and
 the

the sharp stings of self-contempt have never entered there.

Benfon flew to me with arquebusade, vinegar, &c. The consciousness of the mean part I then acted, rendered me peevish, and I hastily bid her leave the room.—I blushed as the words escaped me—was it her fault that I was become contemptible!—When she was gone out, Harriet said, “I fear, Madam, you are much hurt, indeed!”—“Yes, Harriet, to the heart!” I sunk down upon the couch, and covered my face with my handkerchief.—She threw herself at my feet, and, without attempting to pry into the cause, implored me to let her put a bandage round my ankle, lest Sir William should be alarmed at my supposed obstinacy, and send for a surgeon.

This

158 THE HISTORY OF

This I refused, and, on the instant, resolved to extricate myself from the hateful appearance of having entered into a mean collusion with Colonel Walter. I rang the bell for Benson, and, assuming as chearful a countenance as I could put on, told her that I had not received any hurt that required particular application, and that time should be my only physician.

I then dressed myself as usual, and, when the last dinner bell rung, I desired Harriet to accompany me to the parlour. —Sir William seemed surprized at seeing me walk, and said he was just then coming to assist me, or, as the old ballad said, *to take up his load of vanity.*

When I sat down to table, I found myself extremely ill;—I tried to eat, but in
vain.—

vain.—I soon retired after dinner, and sat down to write this account of my mortification to you.—It is now eight o' clock, and I can no longer support the violent pain in my head, or hold the pen.—
Adieu, adieu, my sister,

My friend, my confident,

L. BARTON.

P. S. By whom, or how contrived, the picture had been laid on the table in the temple, I cannot guess; nor know I yet through what medium to inquire about it.

L E T-

L E T T E R XLIV.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

MANY days have elapsed since I concluded my last letter to my Fanny, some of them have passed like the arrow that flieth through the air, and leaves no trace behind—Would I had accompanied their flight! but, alas! it will not be! and by the same Almighty fiat which first called me into being, I am again recalled from the confines of eternity—May that gracious Power that has been pleased to prolong my existence, endue me with resignation to his all-wise decrees!

I am at present but ill able to write;
the account I can give you of myself,
must

must therefore be short, but it will tell my sister that I live, and, notwithstanding my desiring her to forget me, I still flatter myself that my life is of consequence to her happiness.

The moment I had sealed my last letter to you, I found myself unable to sit up, and went to bed, but not to rest. About eleven Sir William came into my chamber, and on finding me extremely feverish, muttered something about fine ladies being always vapourish, or indisposed, and wished me a good night.

Never was health more sincerely welcomed by a dying wretch, than sickness was now by me—I hoped, I trusted, I should be released! and invoked the king of terrors, with the unhappy Constance,

“ Oh

" Oh amiable, lovely death !
 " Arise forth from thy couch of lasting night,
 " Thou hate and terror to prosperity ;
 " Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest,
 " And kiss thee as thy wife : misery's love,
 " Oh come to me !"

In this manner did I pass the night, rejoicing in the increase of my disorder, till the delirium which it brought on rendered me insensible to it, and every thing else : for five days I continued in a state of mental annihilation, the return of my reason, was like the appearance of an ignis fatuus, it glimmered, and vanished, several times, as if unwilling to return to the wretched habitation which it had forsaken.

Harriet, my beloved, my gentle Harriet, whose tenderness and attention to me has been unremitted, assures me
 that

that Sir William was much afflicted during my illness; and that though Colonel Walter endeavoured to console him, yet he also appeared much affected, and quitted the house the next day.

May the miseries which he has brought upon me, make a proper impression on his heart, and turn his detested passion into contrition for his crimes, and compassion for the sufferings of his injured wife! As soon as I was pronounced out of danger, Sir William went to visit a distant part of his estate, where he is establishing a manufacture.— He has been gone ten days, and in that time, I think both my mind and body have acquired strength; perhaps it is owing to the weakness of the latter, that the former is more composed. But I will
endea-

164 THE HISTORY OF

endeavour to enjoy the temporary calm, though I fear that the storm has only subsided, and may perhaps return with double fury, to wreck this feeble bark—Be that as it may, I shall ever remain
Your truly affectionate sister,

L. BARTON.

P. S. Where and how is Mrs. Walter? assure her of my kindest remembrance: her sufferings are so deeply engraved on my heart, that not even my own can efface them—Happy Fanny! that have been able to mitigate even a part of her sorrows, by removing the bitter pangs of maternal anxiety for the fate of a beloved child!

L E T-

LETTER XLV.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

Paris.

THE seeing my letter dated from this place, will in some measure account to my dear Louisa, for my silence, at a time when she stood most in need of every consolation that friendship could bestow on a tenderly beloved and suffering sister — I am however selfish enough to rejoice that I was unacquainted with the danger that threatened your life, till it was past, for I had the painful pleasure of receiving both your letters, on my arrival here, last night.

Truly distressing and affecting as they are, my head is at present so filled with
the

the extraordinary events which have happened within a very short space, that though my heart is truly sensible of your afflictions, I find it impossible to give its feelings vent, till I have informed you of a circumstance which I am certain will afford you the sincerest pleasure.

Delia! my brother's beloved Delia! Delia Colville lives! as Zanga says, "First recover that, and then you shall hear further."—Our good angel! our dear Mrs. Walter! received a letter from Pere Guillaume, about the middle of last month, acquainting her that he would meet her at Calais, and attend her to what part of France she pleased; but were he to recommend any particular convent, it should be Les Dames Ursulines, at St. Omers, as the superior

was

was his near relation, and particular friend.

This recommendation was perfectly agreeable to Mrs. Walter, for many reasons; the vicinity of St. Omers to England, was perhaps the strongest, as it flattered her with the hopes of seeing me, at some time or other, if she lived; and rendered the immediate removal of her daughter convenient, in case of her death.

I accompanied her to Dover, and feared that I had taken my last farewell of my amiable friend, when I saw her embark for Calais—I heard from her, in a few days after our parting, and she was not worse—I had then determined to spend the remainder of the summer

at Cleveland-hall, in executing some little romantic plans of improvement, in order to amuse myself, and surprise Sir George at his return from Italy, which he had promised should be before winter. But a second letter from Mrs. Walter afforded me an opportunity of surprising him, indeed! She told me that in the convent where she then resided, there was a very beautiful young English lady, who went by the name of Wilson, who, upon having seen the address of her letter to me, as it went to the tour, in order to be sent to the post office, implored her permission to speak to her in private; that some time had elapsed before she could find an opportunity, and when she did, she informed her that her name was Colville, Delia Colville! I again repeat it! That she had been placed there,
by

by her mother, without her knowledge, or consent, who had desired that she might be closely confined, debarred the use of pen and ink, and prevented from even going into the parlour, or conversing with any of the pensioners; as she was represented to be so artful, that she would corrupt and impose on them by the insincere plausibility of her manners, and was actually upon the point of disgracing her family, by a shameful connection with a man of inferior rank and fortune.—That in consequence of this cruel aspersion, she had been treated with the utmost severity that the rules of the convent would admit of, and that from the time of her entrance, till that moment, she had never heard from her mother, or any other person whatsoever.

She then, blushing, mentioned Sir George Cleveland, and said she had long vainly flattered herself, that he would have fought her out, and released her from so iniquitous and cruel a confinement; but that if even he had forgotten and forsaken her, she was convinced that his sister's humanity would interest itself in behalf of an oppressed and injured person, whom she had once honoured with the name of friend!

She added, that the mildness of her temper, and the perfect acquiescence she had shewn under the severe restraints that were imposed on her, had influenced the nuns to treat her with less harshness than at first, and that she had been lately allowed the honour of conversing with the superior; but that the moment she attempted

tempted to justify herself from her mother's slander, she was enjoined silence, and obliged to retire to her cell ; after having this reflection urged against her, that it must be always more natural to suppose children to be undutiful or ungrateful, than that parents should be unkind or unjust. This maxim is certainly true, in general ; but there are sometimes instances which occur in life, that baffle all philosophy, with regard to the human mind.

O, my Louisa, does not your heart grieve for the sufferings of the innocent and unoffending Delia? When Mrs. Walter promised her to acquaint me with her situation, she cried out, " It is
 " enough ! I know Miss Cleveland ; I
 " shall be released ! Yet sure Sir George
 " will at least accompany his sister, if

“ she should come to take me out of
 “ my confinement, and I shall see him
 “ once again.”

Mrs. Walter told her, she believed that would be impossible, for—She interrupted her, by exclaiming, “ Is he
 “ married? If he is, I may as well stay
 “ here; Miss Cleveland’s kindness will
 “ be useless to me.”—On Mrs. Walter’s telling her that he was in Italy, and not married, she kissed her hand, and bathed it with her tears, and said, “ Do not
 “ despise me, madam, for loving the
 “ most amiable of men—He is the counterpart of your Miss Cleveland; and
 “ if you knew him, you would love him
 “ also!”

The moment I received Mrs. Walter’s letter, I went immediately to councillor
 W—,

W——, to know what were the proper and legal steps to be taken for the recovery of my beloved Delia: he told me he would wait on the lord chancellor, next day, and furnish me with proper powers to compel Mrs. Colville to produce her daughter in the chancery-chamber, who, as a minor, was to be considered as a ward of the court, though the guardianship of her person and fortune had been before granted to her detestable mother.

I then returned home, wrote to Mrs. Walter, and enclosed a few lines to Delia, entreating her to keep up her spirits, till I could effect her release, which I promised to do with the utmost expedition.—I ordered my cloaths to be packed up, and a chaise with four horses to

be in readiness, the next day; and the moment Counsellor W —— furnished me with my instructions, I set out for Dover, accompanied by my maid and two men servants.—There was a messenger dispatched at the same time, with his lordship's order, to Mrs. Colville; but if she should not be found, or should abscond upon receiving it, I am to apply to Lord H ——, our ambassador in France, whom I have the honour of being very well acquainted with, to procure a special mandate from the court of Versailles, for her release.

I wrote to my brother, who is now at Naples, in a very ambiguous stile, hinting as if I had heard some vague report of Delia's being alive; for I durst not trust him with the mighty joy at once,

as I have been told that the sudden effects of that passion have sometimes been as fatal in their consequences, as those of grief.

I then informed him of my intention of going to Paris; and said, as I knew all places were indifferent to him, I hoped he would have galantry enough to meet me there, as the pleasure I promised myself in seeing him, was the principal cause of my undertaking the journey.

The moment of my arrival at St. Omers, I was met by Mrs. Walter: I need not describe to you the effects of our interview.—I flatter myself that she looks better than she did: she says the joy she feels at having been, though accidentally,

176 THE HISTORY OF

cidentally, the instrument of good to the amiable Delia, has roused her spirits from the torpid state they had continued in, while she considered herself but as an useless burthen, or, at best, an insignificant blank, in life.

She told me she had not had an opportunity of seeing Miss Colville since she received my letter, but at prayers; that she had endeavoured to render her looks as expressive as possible, by the cheerfulness of her air; and that Delia seemed to understand the hint in her favour. She advised me not to go to the convent, as it was certain that I should not be permitted to see Miss Colville; and her hearing that I had been there, might throw her off her guard, so far, as to alarm the nuns, and make them con-
fine

fine her still more closely, or perhaps, transfer her, as is sometimes the case, over to some other convent.

I was convinced by her reasons, and, restraining my fond impatience, I set out the next morning for Paris, where I arrived last night, and have the mortification to learn, this morning, that Mrs. Colville is gone to Toulouse, as it is thought, to settle there. — The lord chancellor's messenger is gone off post to her; and here must I remain till his return.

And now let me assure my Louisa, that not even the joy I feel at the certainty of Delia's restoration, can prevent me for a moment from sympathizing, in the tenderest manner, with her distress;

178 THE HISTORY OF

the circumstances of which are certainly equally difficult and mortifying.

There never was any thing so unfortunately critical as your situation with that vile Walter, when Sir William's arrival was announced : the snare, as you say, seemed contrived by fate—I honour your struggling through it, and not letting the wretch triumph in the success of his scheme, which he certainly would have done, had you carried on the deceit beyond the moment that it was absolutely necessary—I am grieved, but not surprised, at the effect which the anguish of your mind has had upon your constitution ; and am, I hope, truly thankful for your recovery—And may it be a perfect one !

Surely,

Surely, Louisa, you ought to think Lord Lucan to blame, with regard to the picture; he must have hazarded your reputation, by making a confidante of the person who placed it on your table. Can it be possible that the enamoured Harriet can have verified, nay exceeded, the romantic ideas of submissive tenderness, which Prior has given us in the character of his Emma.

I know not what to think; but if Harriet be indeed the confidante of Lord Lucan, she claims the highest degree of admiration, that the strongest fortitude, joined with the tenderest sensibility, can possibly excite—But this character comprehends, perhaps, something more than woman. Do not be outdone by her, my sister, but strive to emulate the virtue which you must admire.

Were you to look minutely into the situation of my heart, you would find that I can practise, as well as preach; for though I perhaps may never be entirely able to eradicate all traces of my weakness for Lord Hume, I have, by a kind of discipline, more severe than any in the Romish church, conquered my desire of speaking of him; nor do I allow even my thoughts the fond, though sad indulgence of contemplating either his faults or merits; for the moment his idea obtrudes itself upon my mind, I snatch up a book, or pen, and drive him directly from that place which he was not worthy to inhabit.

Take notice, that the poets are banished out of my library; and that my present studies are of the reasoning kind,
and

and call for all my attention—I wish you could be prevailed upon to try this recipe—For indeed I am, for many reasons, more anxious for your recovery even than for my own! My malady can only injure an individual, and that myself: yours, like a contagion, must be fatal to many—Stop the infection then, before it spreads, and you will hereafter reflect, with pleasure, that so many persons, who are, and ought to be, dear to you, are indebted for their happiness, to your virtue.—I am convinced that this sentiment will have more weight with you, than any selfish consideration could; for full well I know the nobleness of my Louisa's nature.

I was much pleased with Sir William's behaviour, on account of your supposed

lameness; and still more so, with your candour, in relating it to me; as there is no doubt but that his kindness must have luckily increased your own self-condemnation.

I wish Harriet would make you the confidante of her innocent passion for Lord Lucan; as your tenderness for her, joined to your own delicacy, would then restrain you from the too dangerous indulgence of talking of him, at least before her; and I should then wish that she might not be a moment out of your sight.

Forgive me, my ever dear and amiable sister! for presuming to dictate to a heart and understanding like yours; but the greatest physician will not prescribe

LADY BARTON. 183

scribe for himself when sick, and will even condescend to take the advice of a person whose skill he knows to be inferior to his own—All I can plead in favour of my present prescription is, that I have tried it myself with success, and that it is recommended to you by the warmest affection of

F. CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLVI.

Lord HUME to Lord LUCAN.

Naples.

I Verily believe, my dear Lucan, that there never was a more unfortunate knight-errant than myself, and that the renowned hero of La Mancha was but a prototype, both of my folly and my suffer-

sufferings. I think, I want nothing but a 'squire as triftful as yourself, to record my misadventures in the stile of a ballad, called the Disastrous Traveller, or Lord Hume's Garland—which would certainly supersede the Babes in the Wood, and Barbara Allen, in the English Chronicle; and set all the nurfery-maids and children in our nation a-blubbering.

My last informed you how completely I was duped at Venice; that I had lost my mistress, and my money: "Bagatelles! not worth thinking of, say you; cheaply off, for some thousands," &c. &c.—Well! philosophy is a fine thing, said I to myself! and I will endeavour to think like Lord Lucan—But I had better have recollected the famous sentence recorded to have been uttered
from

from the pulpit, by an Irish bishop (who by the way was an Englishman,) and prepared myself for what was to follow

—"Single misfortunes, (said his reverence) never come alone, and the greatest of evils is attended by greater."

Now to apply my text.—In a very ill temper, and with about a hundred pieces in my pocket, I set out from Venice; and journeying by land and by water, arrived safe in the Ecclesiastical territories. About two leagues from Tivoli my carriage broke down; I had no attendants but one servant, who sat in the carriage with me, and very ill supplied the place of my former fellow-traveller; I had left one footman sick at Venice, who was to follow me, and discharged all the rest of my useless parade.

I did

I did not chuse to leave my baggage to the care, or rather mercy, of the postilion, and as it was not quite dark, I ordered Saunders, you know old Robert, to stay by the chaise, till I could send people from Tivoli, either to mend it, or assist him to bring my trunks to some place of safety.

I had not walked half a league, when I was attacked by banditti, who demanded my purse, and on my attempting to make some resistance, as I wore a *couteau de chasse*, they knocked me down, gave me several cuts over the head, stript me of my money, cloaths, and watch, and left me for dead on the spot.

As it grew late, Saunders became alarmed for my safety, and tried to prevail

vail on the postilion to let him have one of the horses, in order to overtake and guard me on the road to the town. The fellow either was, or pretended to be, afraid to stay by himself, they therefore mounted the pair, and set out together for Tivoli.

As I was left directly in the highway, the horses started as they came up to me, and when the men alighted to see what was the matter, they found me weltering in my blood, but with so much appearance of life that I still breathed, and sometimes groaned.—Poor old Saunders tore off his shirt to bind up my wounds, as well as he could in the dark, and covered me with his own cloaths, while the postilion rode off in search of a surgeon and a litter, to convey me to some shelter.

My

My senses did not return till the next day, when I found myself covered with bandages, and so faint and weak with loss of blood that I could not speak. Saunders gave a scream of joy, at seeing me open my eyes, and recounted what had befallen me.

I lay in this state of misery above three weeks, and when I was able to rise, I had not a single garment of any sort to put on; for the postilion, I presume, considering that I should have no further occasion for them, had assumed to himself the office of an executor, and carried off my baggage, with the chaise and horses, and got clear out of his Holiness's dominions before there was any inquiry made after him.

I sent Saunders off immediately to Rome, with a draught on my banker,
 Y M which

which he received, and returned as quick as possible ; but I was still unable to travel, and a wound which I had received in my right arm, prevented my being able to use a pen, without suffering extremely—Let this account for your not hearing from me during my confinement.

As I had a good deal of leisure to reflect upon my own folly, I determined to grow wise incontinently ; and thought the best proof I could give of my discretion, was to turn my steps towards England —I was however obliged to go to Rome, for a few days, to settle with my banker —As soon as my business was dispatched, I set out, in pursuance of my plan, and have arrived thus far, on my route over.

I went

190 THE HISTORY OF

I went, as was natural, to the house where I had formerly lived with Margaritha ; and could not help making some inquiries after her : to my great surprise, they told me that she was then in this city, and lived in a most exemplary manner, with an ecclesiastic, who was believed to be her brother.

A spirit of revenge took possession of me the moment that I heard of this pretended priest and brother, and I determined to see my fallen angel, upbraid her with her perfidy, and punish the villain who had robbed me of my mistress, and cheated me of my money.

I wandered about Naples, for several days, without being able to discover any trace of her : at last I bethought myself
of

of visiting the churches, for as she now pretended to be a devotee, I might possibly meet her in one of them—Accordingly I one day saw a woman kneeling at a confessional, who, though she was veiled, I immediately knew to be Margarita.

I waited for a long time before she had concluded her devotions, and joined her just as she was going out of the porch; when I spoke to her, she lifted up her veil, and looked at me with a countenance so full of sweetness, that I instantly forgot my resentment, and could have fallen at her feet, and entreated her to be reconciled to me.

She spoke to me in a low voice, and said, “I have used you ill, my lord, but
“I have been severely punished for my

“ crime; I dare not hope you should
“ again receive me into your favour, but
“ come and accept of all the restitution
“ that is now in my power to make you;
“ I live in the Strada del Santo Marco;
“ my tyrant will be asleep by eleven
“ o’clock, I shall then at least have an
“ opportunity of imploring your for-
“ giveness—I dare not talk to you longer,
“ adieu.”

Despise me as you will, Lucan, I confess that I felt my tenderness for this infamous woman revive, and instead of going directly to a magistrate, or endeavouring to do myself justice on her, and her vile accomplice, I counted the minutes with impatient expectation of that happy one, which should again restore me to the pleasure of seeing and conversing with her.

At

At the time appointed I repaired to my rendezvous, which was at a considerable distance from the place where I lived, and in a very retired part of the town: as I passed through an unfrequented street, I was set upon by four bravos; I instantly drew my sword, and determined to sell my life as dear as possible—As I had the advantage of a wall at my back, I defended myself successfully, for a few minutes; but should have been overpowered if providence had not sent Sir George Cleveland, and another gentleman, to my rescue. At their approach the bravoës would have fled, but I secured one of them whom I had wounded, and who proved to be the pretended priest and brother of Margarita.

When we had lodged him properly, and I had got a slight wound, which I had received, dressed, I communicated the whole of my adventure frankly to Sir George, and wished him to accompany me in pursuit of that worthless woman, whom I supposed to be an accomplice in the intended assassination, and whom I now resolved to give up to justice.

Sir George is a gallant fellow, Lucan. He talked so very rationally, that he dissuaded me from my purpose, as he said the bringing Margarita to punishment, if I should have resolution sufficient to do so, must of necessity expose myself; observing also, that I ought not to pursue a wretch with too much rigour, whom I had formerly contributed to render abandoned.

His

His remarks upon the folly and baseness of men, in their commerce with the unhappy of the other sex, were truly generous—I remember but one of them at present. I think he said, “That we
 “first take pains to destroy the foundation of every female virtue, modesty;
 “and are then surprised to find the superstructure totter.”—That is foolish enough to be sure, though we practise it every day.

But to conclude, for I begin to think you are heartily tired, as even I grow a little weary, though I am talking of myself, which is the pleasantest of all subjects.—The next morning brought me a most doleful letter, from my Fair Penitent, entreating me, for the love I once bore her, not to prosecute her brother,

as she still affected to stile him, declaring herself intirely innocent of any evil intentions of his, with regard to my life, and offering to refund whatever remained of the jewels she had robbed me of, provided I would but remit the prosecution.

I consulted with Cleveland, who advised me not to be prevailed on to suffer such a pest to society, as Pere Jacques, to escape ; but if he would give up his accomplices, to use my interest to get them all sent to the gallies together ; as to *la bella Signora*, he thought I should make terms with her also, and let her compound for her crimes by a life of repentance — That the jewels she mentioned, should be sold, in order to pay her pension among *les Filles repenties*, where she should be obliged to enter on her probation immediately.

I was

I was charmed with this scheme, and by his assistance have happily put it in execution.—Would he could be as successful in restoring me to the esteem of an amiable woman, as he has been in extricating me from the artifices of a vile one—But I have never yet dared to name Miss Cleveland to him; and I will patiently go through a year of probation under his eye, before I even presume to hope that he will favour my suit.—In the mean time I am happy to find, from his behaviour, that he is a stranger to mine, upon that occasion.

He talks of returning to England in a few months.—I am determined to accompany him, and I hope that you will have got so far the better of your romantic passion, by that time, as to quit

198 THE HISTORY OF

your sorrowful solitude, and meet us there.

Here ends my woeful story, which however, has had a fortunate conclusion. May all your adventures terminate as happily, sincerely wishes your

affectionate friend

HUME.

P. S. I have this moment received a billet from Sir George Cleveland, acquainting me that he means to set out immediately for Paris—This is a sudden flight, but I am determined to accompany him. Direct to me accordingly.

L E T-

LADY BARTON. 199

LETTER XLVII.

Lord LUCAN to Lord HUME.

My dear Hume,

I Sincerely congratulate you on the *operatical denouement* of your Italian *comédie*; and think that even Metastasio has not wound up any of his catastrophes with more poetical justice, than you have shewn in the disposal of your *dramatis personæ*.

But the most enviable part of your good fortune, is the having met with such a friend as Sir George Cleveland, whose knowlege of the world, joined to an excellent understanding, and an amiable heart, (all which he has shewn in the management of your affair with Margarita) must render him at once an object of your

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affection and respect ; and afford you an opportunity of benefiting, both by his precepts and example.

I have not the honour of knowing Sir George, but have heard his character, description, and story. He is neither older, wiser, nor better principled than you are ; to what then are we to impute the difference between the preceptor and the pupil ? To nothing more than a circumstance which I am glad to lay hold of, for your instruction. He had conceived a strong, but chaste passion, for a woman of merit, whose name I know not ; than which, nothing in nature more elevates the mind, improves the understanding, refines the manners, and purges the affections of man. His mistress is dead, I hear lately, but the influence

ence of virtue reaches beyond the grave; for a heart once rendered pure, like a transmuted metal, can never degenerate into its original baseness again.

I have often thought that many of the errors of our young men of quality, are owing to a wrong choice of the governors to whom they are intrusted, at the most critical æra of their lives, when their passions are strongest, and their judgment weakest—I mean when they are thought old enough to be sent abroad for improvement, and not deemed wise enough to conduct themselves.

Fathers and guardians, on this occasion, generally fix on some person of learning, which by the ignorant is frequently mistaken for sense; as what is

called a liberal education, is as falsely, and frequently, supposed to be as synonymous with a liberal mind.

The greatest blockheads I have ever known, have been bred in college — Neither absurdity nor meanness prevent a man from becoming master of a language, nor of arriving at a competent knowledge in any particular branch of science.

But these are not the qualifications necessary to form a noble mind; and yet an ignorant pedant, is not only the first person from whom we receive the rudiments of education, but is too often the last, to whose final care we are consigned, to receive that fine polish, to which our mind and manners owe their most distinguished

guished lustre—that moral enamel, which both brightens and preserves.

If I should ever be happy enough to see a son of mine at a fit age to send abroad, I shall endeavour to find out a governor for him, *qui a vecú*; I mean one who, with a complete experience of the world, has both sense and virtue sufficient to detest vice, admire virtue, and yield indulgence to the foibles and irregularities of youth and inexperience; whose morality should exceed

“ The fixed and settled rules,
“ Of vice, and virtue, in the schools ;”

and whose principles of religion, though perfectly conformable to our established mode of worship, should, with regard to the best characteristic of it, know no difference of sect, but extend itself to the

outermost line of the great circle of charity, which embraces all mankind.

You will, perhaps, say that I have drawn an ideal character, like that of a *patriot king*.—It may be so; but the person I should select for such a purpose, of entering a young man of rank or fortune into the world at large, should be some reduced officer, whose humanity had been rather softened, than hardened, by danger and disappointment; one who had been trained up in the school of honour, which may be styled the true sublime of morals—And such a guardian, preceptor, or passport through life, I should prefer to the whole conclave of parsons; out of which class of men are too generally chosen the *bear-leaders* to our modern cubs of quality.—So much for governors.

I think

I think you judge rightly, in not mentioning Miss Cleveland to Sir George, while your amour with Margarita is so recent—There is something extremely indelicate in professing a passion for a virtuous woman, before we have undergone a sufficient quarantine, after the contagion of an abandoned one—A man in such a situation resembles a centaur, half human, half brute—Or at best he can but say with Cyrus's friend Araspes, "I have two souls!" Sir George is too good a judge of human nature, not to excuse your infatuation in favour of an artful beauty; but how shall Miss Cleveland be reconciled to your infidelity? or on what security shall she rest her hope, that you may not be subject to a second delirium? Indeed, my dear Hume, a year is too short for a term of probation,

or

or rather of atonement, though you were to spend it in the severe penance which your prototype Don Quixote endured, for the disenchantment of Dulcinea, upon the Black Mountain.

By the way, I think the constancy and sufferings of that renowned knight bear a much greater similitude to my sufferings than to yours; for I do not find that you resemble him in any point but your misadventures, which like his, were the natural and necessary consequences of madness, enthusiasm, and folly—I hope I may venture to say this without offence, as you have so seriously declared your determination of becoming wise incontinently.

If any thing could have tempted me to leave Ireland, at present, it would have

have been to meet you in London ; but as you have now a much stronger inducement than my company, to urge your return, I shall remain in what you call my sorrowful solitude, as it is now not only become pleasant, but dear to me ; for solitude is sometimes the nurse of contentment, as well as of woe.

From this hint, you will conclude my heart to be more at ease, than when I wrote last to you, and your conclusion will be just.—It is, indeed, much more at ease, yet more anxious still—Love deals in contradictions you see.

I shall now conclude, with subscribing myself, my dear Hume's

affectionate friend,

and servant,

LUCAN.

LETTER XLVIII.

Lord HUME to Lord LUCAN.

Paris.

I Tell you, Lucan, there is no such thing as resisting fate—Here am I, with as good and sober dispositions as any man of two and twenty in Europe, for ever getting into some scrape or other, without temptation, or excuse; or even knowing how, or why, I became engaged! Well, then, a knight errant I certainly am, of nature's own dubbing, and I will now *courteously* relate to you, myself, for want of a 'squire, my new achievement.

But first I must acquaint you, that ever since our arrival here, Sir George
 2
 Cleve-

Cleveland has been so totally taken up with some private business of his own, that poor melancholy I have been left to the pleasant amusement of contemplating my own extravagance, and folly, which has, you know, deprived me of the happiness of seeing, or conversing with his charming sister, who has met him here; and as I quitted Naples almost at a minute's warning, I left old Robert to pack up my cloaths, and bring them after me.

In this situation I could not possibly make my appearance in public, or even venture to visit any of my quondam acquaintance, in my travelling-dress.—I spent two days, *tout seul*, and found an unlucky truth, that any company would be less dull to me than my own.

On

On this discovery I sallied forth, and in sauntering along the Boulevard, I happened to meet Jack Wilson, of the guards, who is as dissipated a genius as myself. I proposed to him our going to dine at some of the environs of Paris, to which he readily agreed—A chaise was ordered directly, we drove off to Noisy le Sec.

We walked about while dinner was preparing, and at a little distance observed a castle, defended by a deep moat, great iron gates, a draw-bridge, and immense high walls.—The appearance of this extraordinary mansion, roused my chivalry; I figured to myself a beautiful damsel confined there by some horrid enchanter, or giant, and determined that I would, if possible, set the fair captive

tive free. Wilson laughed at my romantic ideas, but they had taken too strong possession of me to be easily baffled.

When we returned to our inn, we inquired from our host, who were the inhabitants of that Gothic fortress.—He told us they were two very beautiful young ladies, of high birth and large fortunes, who being determined never to marry, yet disliking the severities of a convent, had chose to seclude themselves from the world in that retirement.

He added, that the curiosity of all the neighbouring gentry, was so highly raised, that many attempts had been made to get a sight of these fair recluses, but in vain ; for no mortal had ever seen
them,

them, since their arrival there, though it was known they walked in their gardens every day.

Curiosity began now to operate upon Wilson, as much as romance had done before on me, and we resolved that we would take a peep at these voluntary votaries of Madam Diana, *conte qui conte*—Many and various were the schemes which we framed, and rejected, for the gratification of our idle and impertinent inquisitiveness, during the course of that night: we lay in the same room, in order to continue our consultations; but when the dawn appeared, we were just as undetermined on what method to pursue, as we were at the moment we lay down.

We

We rose, and called our host into council, who assured us that the castle was inaccessible, unless we were mad enough to venture our lives by swimming over a deep fossé, which defended it in front, or scrambling through a thicket of briars, which prevented our approach on the other side; and that if we should even be able to subdue these difficulties, there was still an immense high wall to climb, which no man could get over without hazarding life or limb.

Opposition but increased our ardor, and we at last resolved to attempt the thicket, in preference to the fossé, as we thought we should make a better appearance in the eyes of these supposed charmers, even with our cloaths torn, than after emerging dripping wet out of
a dirty

a dirty ditch.—And by the way, Lucan, I think that all the water in and about Paris, *wants washing*, as was said once, by a witty friend of mine. I never saw such a muddy puddle in my life, as their boasted Seine — The yellow Tiber, or the Bristol Severn, are crystal to it.

I will not detain you by repeating the fatigues and difficulties we suffered, in this attempt; suffice it to say that our cloaths were torn, and our hands, legs, and faces, as much scratched, as if we had made a party on the pantiles with a groupe of amorous tabbies. — But what are not patience and perseverance able to subdue?

In short we scaled the walls, and seated ourselves in a good pleasant harbour, in
a corner

a corner of the garden, valuing ourselves on our heroic achievement, and impatiently expecting the reward of our toils, by being blest at last with a view of these fair vestals.

In a short time after we had made our lodgment in this redoubt, to our inexpressible delight, we heard the sound of female voices talking in a chearful lively tone; and soon saw two ladies walking towards us, down an alley that fronted the harbour we were in.

But no language will ever be able to describe our amazement, when the speakers had advanced near enough to be clearly seen, and distinctly heard by us.—No idea either of Venus or the Graces, or Diana and her Nymphs, will suit the description—But if you can rumage up
8 any

216 THE HISTORY OF

any recollection of Cybele, or for that matter you need not go so far back, as mother Shipton will serve as well, to represent the two old hags, that appeared then before us.

“It must be enchantment,” said I, to Wilfon.—He replied, “I see nothing enchanting about them; they are both ugly and old.”—“No woman is old in France, remember that, Wilfon; or at least let us endeavour to persuade these grannams that we think so, for civility is the only passport by which we can hope to get over the draw-bridge in safety.

When they approached the harbour, perceiving us they started too, in their turn, and would have fled back, if their
old

old shanks had been supple enough to have corresponded with their fears ; but we soon quieted their apprehensions, by the mildness of our demeanour, and the frank confession we made of the romantic curiosity which had prompted us to this frolic.

Being thus recovered from this alarm, they both laughed immoderately at the awkward confusion which appeared in our faces ; and one of them, addressing us with infinite good humour and vivacity, said, “ We are extremely obliged
 “ to you gentlemen, or rather *courteous*
 “ *knights*, for the perils you have encoun-
 “ tered, for our sakes ; and also for convin-
 “ cing us that the noble spirit of chivalry,
 “ is not yet quite extinct in the world. Be-
 “ lieve me, we wish rather more earnestly

“ than you, that we were possessed of those
 “ charms which you expected to have met
 “ with, in this galant adventure ; but youth
 “ and beauty are transitory things, and
 “ with them we have lost the admiration of
 “ your sex, and merely in sport had yet a
 “ mind to try if it was not still in our power
 “ to occasion a disappointment as great,
 “ though not indeed so severe, as any
 “ young and beautiful coquette might make
 “ her lover feel. If I may judge by your
 “ countenances, I think we have so far suc-
 “ ceeded ; and the only amends we can
 “ make you, for having sped our frolic,
 “ is to desire the favour of your compa-
 “ ny to dinner, and to promise to convey
 “ you back again, by a shorter and plea-
 “ santer road than you came, to Noisy
 “ le Sec, without any further damages
 “ than what the view of our persons seems
 “ already

“ already to have made you pay for your
“ peeping. ”

You may suppose how confoundedly silly Wilson and I looked all this while ; but I was so much pleased with the spirit and good humour of this lively dowager, that I wished her thirty years younger, intirely for her own sake. We accepted her invitation with the best grace we could, and entered into a very chearful conversation with them both, during which they discovered that we were Englishmen, and informed us, that they were our country-women. The one, who seemed to take the lead in every thing, is a sister of Lord D—’s, and had been, while she lived in England, an intimate acquaintance of my mother’s—Who the other lady was, did not transpire.

Before we parted, Wilson and I both promised her not to disclose their secrets, if she chose to carry on the jest for any further time; but she gave us leave to publish it to our friends, if we pleased, as she meant to quit that place immediately; said she and her companion were both tired of their voluntary confinement, and did not believe that, if they were to remain there seven years longer, any Frenchman would ever give himself as much trouble about them as we had had done.

I charged myself with some commissions, *pour mes belles antiques*, which I shall execute in England with the most *knightly* punctuality imaginable, and returned laughing to Paris, about an hour ago. — Robert is arrived with my baggage:

gage: I shall dress and go to the Comedie, though I believe it will be near over, before I get there.

As I am resolved to attend Sir George Cleveland's motions, and that he seems to be upon the wing, I shall not expect to hear from you, while I remain upon the continent, but hope to find a pacquet from you, at my arrival in old England; till then, adieu, my dear Lucan, says

yours,

HUME.

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L E T T E R XLIX.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Southfield.

PLeasure! Joy! they are both inadequate to what I feel, from your account of Delia Colville! my brother! my beloved! my happy brother! what will his transports be! He may certainly say, with Lord Townly, “Long parted friends, that pass through common voyages in life, receive but common gladness at their meeting—But from a shipwreck saved! we mingle tears with our embraces!” And surely the recovery, I might almost say the resurrection, of the beloved and lamented Delia, is a still higher cause for rapture.

I should

I should fear for his life, or senses, if this secret was in any other hands but yours—Yet even for you, I think it will be a difficult task to moderate his extasy—Were I now to meet him, I should fly into his arms, and cry out, She lives! I know you will not do so; but though you may restrain your tongue, will not your eyes betray the mighty joy? will they not sparkle with unusual lustre, and speak of Delia Colville? Mine do so at this moment, though their weak beams have long been quenched in tears.—I wait impatiently for another letter from you—Do but tell me they have met, and my mind will be at peace, for I shall then suppose, that nought but death can part them.

I do not wish to mix one gloomy line with this joyful subject, I shall, therefore,

say little of myself.—I am recovering from my late illness, though slowly; Sir William is returned, in an alarming state; he fell from his horse, about a fortnight ago; his physician apprehends that he has received some inward hurt, as he spits blood ever since.—My attention to him is unremitted, he seems pleased with it; and I begin once more to flatter myself that my Fanny's prediction may yet be verified.

Colonel Walter has renewed his visit, and made several attempts to speak to me alone, which I have happily evaded; for when I am absent from Sir William, I take care to keep Harriet constantly with me—I perceive he is mortified at my caution, in which, however, I am determined to persevere.

Last

Last night, when our letters came from the post the Colonel took them from the servant, and conveyed one out of his pocket into the parcel: quick as his motions were, this action did not escape me; and the moment I had received those that were addressed to me, I retired, and immediately enclosed the letter which bore no post mark on it, in a blank cover, directed to the Colonel, and ordered it to be instantly delivered to him. When I returned into the parlour to supper, there were strong traces of resentment in his countenance, and he talked rather at, than to me, for the remainder of the evening.

This morning he went from hence, before I was up—Surely he will at length desist from an hopeless pursuit—Twice

have his detested and unsuccessful attempts brought me near the grave—Heaven preserve me from a third! I shudder at the bare apprehension!

Your wishes with regard to my becoming Harriet's confidante, are almost accomplished; for she has confessed to me that she corresponded with Lord Lucan during my illness, and also that she concealed my danger from him, as she judged what his sufferings would be, on that occasion, by her own.—Was ever any thing more truly delicate, than her endeavouring to save him pain?

She offered to shew me his letters; I refused to see them, and told her I had no doubt of his friendship for me, or the propriety and politeness of his manners

manners towards her, but that I could not help observing to her, as a friend, without the authority of a parent, that I feared there was something inconsistent with the strict rules of decorum, in her carrying on such a correspondence.

She blushed extremely, and I could perceive there was something more still labouring in her artless bosom—Lord Lucan's picture came into my thoughts, at the same time, yet I had not resolution sufficient to ask her a single question relative to it.

After a minute's silence, I saw that her face was bathed with tears, she caught my hand, and said, "I have been much more imprudent, Madam, than you yet know of; but if you will be my

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"friend,

228 THE HISTORY OF

“ friend, indeed—Alas! I have no other!
 “ and conceal what is past, from my
 “ uncle, I will tell you all my folly, and
 “ submit my future conduct to your di-
 “ rection.”—I gave her every possible as-
 surance that the tenderest friendship
 could suggest, and I know not which of
 us was most agitated during this scene—
 She owned her having lent my picture to
 Lord Lucan, at his most earnest intreaty,
 on condition that he should give her his;
 that he had kept his promise, but that
 she had been so unfortunate as to lose his
 gift; and that she had lived in perpetual
 apprehension, ever since, lest any acci-
 dent might betray this act of indiscretion
 to her uncle, or to me.—But that she
 still more dreaded its injuring Lord Lu-
 can, by raising a suspicion of his being
 her lover, when heaven, and she could
 tell, he had not such a thought!

Her colour rose to crimson, as she pronounced the last sentence with clasped hands and streaming eyes—I never beheld a more animated figure.—Generous Harriet! I said softly to myself, and my heart reverberated the sound — What pains has it cost her to defend the fidelity of the man she loves, to her rival!— Yes, Fanny, I will emulate the virtue I admire; every effort of my life shall be exerted to promote Harriet's happiness, and from that pure and unsullied source I will endeavour to derive my own!

I confess I am pleased at being able to acquit Lord Lucan of the indiscretion of having made a confidante; his picture must have fallen into the hands of Colonel Walter, when Harriet lost it, and the vile artful wretch contrived to place
it

it as a snare for me, and watched the moment.

How to recover it for the innocent owner, is now the question? I cannot think of any prudent, and therefore possible means, of effecting this, at present. I can neither ask it as a favour, with a safe condescension, nor demand it as a right, without danger.

The variety of distressful subjects with which my late letters have been filled, have so much engrossed my thoughts while writing to you, that I have never mentioned a circumstance which has given me sincere satisfaction, the recovery of Mr. Creswell, Lucy Leister's lover—His father is since dead, by which he is now become Sir Harry Creswell—*Ma chere amie*.

est.

est au comble de ses vœux, but delays the completion both of her own and her lover's happiness, till I am able to be present at the joining of those hands, whose hearts have long been united.

Sir William's indisposition prevents me from having their nuptials celebrated here, as the custom of this country would, on that occasion, require such an exertion of what is called hospitality, which is another term for drinking, as might be prejudicial to him; and my attendance on him restrains me from going up to Dublin to her, so that our wishes alone can attend upon this happy union.

Sir William is not calculated for solitude; he is now debarred from field-sports, and every kind of exercise, and
he

he seeks for amusement from books, in vain—That taste which can alone render reading pleasant, or useful to us, must be acquired in youth; the Muses, like the rest of their sex, resent neglect, and may be wooed, but not won, by those who only seek them as a supplement to more lively pleasures, “Youth’s the season made for joy,” and for literature also.

Colonel Walter’s housekeeper has been to visit Benson, several times of late, and has endeavoured, with a competent share of art, to discover how Mrs. Walter had escaped, and where she now is: you may suppose that she has not gained the wished-for intelligence—Benson would die sooner than betray me.

Harriet

Harriet and I have often wondered that no hint relative to Mrs. Walter has ever escaped the Colonel—I am sometimes tempted to think that he believes us ignorant of that affair; but when I recollect his blushing, in the temple, upon some hint of mine relative to it, I change my opinion.—What a heart must that man have! How black! and of course, how wretched! I am inclined to believe, that the wicked expiate a great part of their sins, in this world, by their constant fear of detection.

Sir Arthur and Miss Ashford are often with us. I begin to apprehend that she has a partiality for Colonel Walter, and am distressed how to act on this occasion—Should I speak of him as I think, she may attribute my sentiments, either
to

234 THE HISTORY OF

to private pique, or a general love of slander, as I am not at liberty to acquaint her with those facts, on which my dislike to him are too justly founded— Yet will it not be an act of baseness, to suffer this charming girl to throw away her affections on such a wretch? Think for me, Fanny, and direct me how to conduct myself, in this critical situation.

Give a thousand loves and congratulations for me, to my brother, and his

“ Latest found! Heaven’s last, best gift!”

Wishes for their happiness must be superfluous, yet they have mine most truly—accept the same from your ever

affectionate sister,

LOUISA BARTON.

P. S.

LADY BARTON. 235

P. S. I find I cannot write a short letter to you—When I began this, I determined not to exceed a page, but, like Eloise,

“ My heart still dictates, and my hand obeys.”

And wherefore should I restrain them, or debar myself from the greatest satisfaction I enjoy? I am not good catholic enough to have faith in the merits of voluntary penances, especially as I feel that I am not without my share of those that are imposed on us—No works of supererogation for me — Once more, adieu.

LET

LETTER L.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

PARIS still, but on the point of quitting it, in a few hours.—My brother arrived here, on Sunday night, and with him—but no matter—He is not of sufficient consequence to interrupt a narrative in which we are all so much interested.—You may be curious tho'—Lord Hume then came with Sir George, from Naples! he has had a thousand ridiculous adventures in Italy—I have not seen him yet, and do not know when I shall.

My eyes, as you apprehended, certainly told tales; for the moment Sir George saw me, he said there is a glad expression in my sister's face, that would almost tempt

tempt me to hope, beyond the bounds of reason; but, alas! Fanny, there is no redemption from the grave!

True, Sir George, I answered, but perhaps your treasure may not yet be consigned to that strong chest. — He caught my hand, and pressing it to his heart, cried out, it is impossible that you should mean to trifle with my anguish! Yet did she not expire at Amiens?

She never was at Amiens, I replied— Where! where then did her pure spirit take its flight, and quit her lovely form? — You must be more composed, Sir George, before I can talk further on this subject. — Why was it started, Fanny? Why are my wounds all made to bleed afresh? Can you delight in cruelty!

Far

Far from it, you know how tenderly I sympathized with your distress, when I believed her dead—If there is a cause in nature, that can make you doubt it now, O! speak it quickly, and ease my anxious heart!

I have strong reasons to believe she lives, or I should not thus have alarmed you—My friend, Mrs Walter, has seen and conversed with a young lady, of the name of Delia Colville, in a convent at Saint Omer's, who may be her.

He dropped upon his knees—and exclaimed—Gracious Heaven! but realize this blessed vision, let me no longer mourn my Delia's loss, and unrepining will I then submit to all that fate or fortune can inflict upon my future days!

Speak

Speak, speak on, my sister! and say again that you believe she lives!—Indeed I do believe so, my dear brother—He rose and caught me in his arms, while the large drops ran plenteous down his cheeks—Tears relieved us both.

I then proceeded to acquaint him with those circumstances which I have already informed you of; as I thought I might now venture to speak to him with more certainty, and that I felt too much pain in keeping him longer doubtful—His transports increased, and it is utterly impossible to give any idea of the excess of his joy.

It was with difficulty I could prevent his going at midnight to Lord H—; but though I prevailed on him to defer his
visit

visit till morning, I could not persuade him to go to bed, or attempt to take any rest or food, except a little wine and water, and the whole night was spent in repeating what I had told him before, and re-reading Mrs. Walter's letter.

Selfish mortal! as he is, he barely mentioned his having extricated Lord Hume out of some doleful disasters, that befel him at Naples, in which an opera-singer was the principal performer.— But what consequence could he suppose the story to be of, to me?

Though I neither am, or ever mean to be connected with his Lordship, I am pleased that my brother saved his life, and that by his means he has got quit of an artful woman, who might probably

bably have ruined his fortune; and I have a kind of satisfied pride also, in thinking that he is so much indebted to our family.

I am afraid there is something mean in the above reflection—but I am not now at leisure enough to trace it back to its source—at some other time I will fairly and philosophically investigate its nature, and receive or reject it, according as I find it derived from a good or bad origin.

Long before the ambassador's servants were stirring, my brother attempted his door, and I think he returned three times before his excellency was visible. As soon as he had acquainted him with his business, Lord H— very obligingly

set out with him, for Versailles, and has promised to get the order for Delia's enlargement as much expedited as possible.

My brother, as you may suppose, remains in waiting, till it is finished, and is then to call on me, and fly to St. Omers, without staying for the return of the chancellor's messenger from Toulouse. I have sat all day in my travelling dress, as I would not delay him for any consideration.

I mentioned your joy on the recovery of Delia ; he returns your love, an hundred-fold, and says he will write both to you and Sir William, as soon as his spirits are a little more composed.

I fear to attempt answering my dear Louisa's letter, at present, as I expect
to

LADY BARTON. 243

to be summoned by my brother every instant.

His carriage turns into the *porte cochere*, this moment. Adieu,

ma tres chere soeur,

F. CLEVELAND.

L E T T E R L I.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

St. Omers.

THOUGH I have been here three days, my head is still giddy with the violent motion and emotion I have gone through, since I left Paris.—We set out the moment I had sealed my last letter to you, and travelled with as much expedition as French roads, horses, and post-boys would permit. Sir George

M 2

was

was determined to stop at Amiens, and notwithstanding the certain assurances I had given him that his Delia was alive, he seemed to be strongly agitated when we drove into the town.

He inquired from our landlord, whether he recollected a young English lady's dying there, at such a time? And being answered in the affirmative, the colour forsook his cheek, he fell almost lifeless on a settee that was near him, and sighed out, "Ah Fanny! why have you deceived me!"

I could not help being provoked at his weakness, and told him I did not know that he was to be a mourner for all the young English women that should die in France; that I was perfectly convinced

ced Miss Colville was alive and well, or I should not have set out on our present expedition ; but if he was inclined to think otherways, he had better not pursue the journey any farther.

He replied, with his usual mildness—

“ Who loves must fear,
“ And sure who loves like me, must greatly fear.”

But my reliance on you has banished my apprehensions, and I now only desire to inquire into this affair, to know by what means Mrs. Colville could avail herself of a stranger's death, to carry on the vile deceit she has practised.

Our host, like most others, was very well inclined to be communicative, and informed us of the following particulars ; that on such a day, the *diligence* that

goes to Paris, stopped at his house, and set down a very pretty young woman, who was so extremely ill, that she was not able to travel farther; and that notwithstanding all possible care was taken of her, she expired on the fourth day after her coming there.

They had discovered before she died, that she was an English heretic, as she absolutely refused to let any of their clergy attend her during her illness; but they knew not even her name, nor whom she belonged to; and though her cloaths and effects were sufficient to defray the expences of her funeral, yet as she was not a catholic, she could not be interred in consecrated ground; and mine host, to use his own phrase, said he was in a perfect quondary, to know how he should dispose of the body.

But

But as good luck would have it, a lady and her maid arrived at his house the next day, in a post-chaise—As they were English, he acquainted them with his distress; and the maid was sent to look at the dead person, in order to know if she could give any account of her—She returned to her mistress, and they were for some time shut up together—At last the lady herself went to look at this lifeless beauty, and the moment she saw her, she gave a loud scream, and ran back into her apartment.

Some time after, the maid called for him, and told him that it was her lady's daughter who had died there, and gave some hints of her having eloped from her friends—She desired that every thing might be prepared in the best manner,

for sending the body to England; and strictly charged him not to let any person go into the chamber where she lay, but those who were immediately concerned about the body.

She added, that he might dispose of the young lady's effects as he thought proper, except a small trunk, which contained only a miniature picture, a pocket book, and some letters; and the lady would pay all the necessary expences on this melancholy occasion.—Every thing was then done as she directed, to the mutual satisfaction of mine host, and that burier of the living and robber of the dead, Mrs. Colville.

I have not now leisure to expatiate on this extraordinary coincidence of circumstances,

stances, yet I must observe that fortune seemed inclined to favour Mrs. Colville's deceit, by the particular situation of the young woman at Amiens, whose interment had imposed on all Delia's friends, even on her lover, and prevented any further inquiry about her.

I dare say you are by this time very impatient to get us to our journey's end; but don't be in a hurry, Louisa, for our haste in setting out before the next day occasioned a very disagreeable delay, as it brought us to the gates of St. Omers, an hour after they were shut, and obliged us to pass a miserable night, in what they call an *auberge*, but in our country, I think it might more justly be stiled a barn.

At last the wished-for morning came, and we pursued our way directly to the convent.—It is impossible to give you any idea of my brother's emotion—When we were shewn into the parlour, I desired to see the superior—I know that I must not stop here to give you a description of her person, but indeed she is a fine old lady.

As soon as she appeared, I delivered the king's mandate to her, which she read with great dignity, but not without surprise; and said if she had been imposed on, with regard to the young lady in question, she was not to blame; and added that she was ready, on the instant, to obey the king's order, by delivering Miss Colville to my care.

Sir George in a transport exclaimed, "Let me but see her, Madam"—There I
inter-

interposed my negative, for Delia's sake, as I feared the effects which so unexpected an interview might have upon her spirits. —It was therefore at last agreed to that I should go into another parlour, see Mrs. Walter, and send her to prepare Delia for such a joyful event.

Our amiable friend soon came to me, and I have the happiness to tell you, that she is most wonderfully recovered; but, in pity to my brother's impatience, I scarce waited to inquire her health, before I appointed her the messenger of glad tidings to our dear Delia.

She returned with her, in an instant; but when the lovely girl beheld me, she could not speak; she made an effort to put her hand through the grate, and sunk down on a chair that stood near her—

Tears came to her relief, and she at last articulated, "O, my beloved Fanny! my "more than *sister*!" At *that word* she blushed, and hid her face, as if to wipe away the tears.

I instantly replied, you are, my dear, the sister of my choice; and by that tender name, and for my brother's sake, I beg you to compose yourself—He is now in the house, and most ardently longs to see you, but must not be indulged at the expence of injuring your health, by an increase of agitation—If you were calm, he should appear this moment.—I am quite calm, she said, and fainted away.

I do not think I was ever so terrified in my life—By the assistance of the nuns
she

she was brought to herself in about ten minutes, and, by the superior's permission, Sir George was admitted into the parlour with me—I thought their meeting would have killed us all—Even an old nun wept, while she administered drops and water to the whole company.—I feel myself too much affected, even at this instant, to be able to repeat the no-conversation that passed at the time. Sir George embraced me, as if I had been his mistress, and Delia clung round Mrs. Walter's neck, calling her deliverer, guardian angel! &c.

When our transports had a little subsided, I proposed our adjourning to the inn, till we could be accommodated with private lodgings; for we had before agreed to wait the return of the chancel-

lor's messenger at St. Omers, as it was absolutely necessary that my brother should have a little rest, after his fatigue both of mind and body—But he was not fated to taste repose as speedily as I then hoped for.

I received Miss Colville in due form, from the hands of the superior, by whom many compliments and apologies were made to her late prisoner.—Delia's behaviour was charming, for instead of reproaches for the severity she had suffered, she returned thanks for the great care that had been taken of her, and took a most polite and even affectionate leave of the whole community.

Mrs. Walter and Olivia accompanied us to the inn, and we passed the day in
mutual

mutual congratulations, and in moralizing on the providential series of incidents that had procured Delia's deliverance—But towards evening we all perceived a visible change in her countenance, and before midnight there appeared strong symptoms of a fever.

My brother was almost distracted; my heart bleeds for him—Should she again be torn from his fond heart, I think it would be impossible that he should survive the second blow—But I will hope the best—He has not gone to bed, since we left Paris; he never stirs from the ante-chamber of the room where she lies, and looks so dreadfully, that I am shocked at seeing him.

The physicians here say that she is not in danger, but they are so miserably ignorant,

ignorant, that I cannot rely on their judgment in a case where I am so sincerely interested. Mrs. Walter and I sit up by turns, and never leave the dear invalid a moment ; I fear she suffers from her concern for us, but she promises, and I hope will perform her engagement, to be well in a few days.

On the very day that we took her out of the convent, there came a letter from her mother, intreating the superior to send Delia to some other nunnery, and charging her to deny her ever having been there, to any person who should inquire after her.—Thank God, we have counter-acted her wicked scheme, and I trust he will restore her to our prayers and wishes !

Again

Again excuse me, my Louisa, for not entering upon the subjects mentioned in your last letter, as the present situation of our beloved brother, and adopted sister, engrosses all my thoughts, and I cannot even allow a minute's attention to what appears a very extraordinary circumstance, which is Lord Hume's following us from Paris, and lodging directly opposite to us, at St. Omers ! He sends five or six times a day to inquire Delia's health, and writes a letter once a day to Sir George.

I can't help being pleased with this appearance of attention and good-nature to my brother, and at the proper respect he shews, in not taking the advantage which he might, of obtruding himself into my presence, under pretence of visiting his friend.

Why,

258 THE HISTORY OF

Why, O why, has he foolishly deprived himself and me, of what once appeared to have been so great a pleasure to us both ! But that is past—I do not, nor I will not, think of him—

Adieu, my dearest sister,

F. CLEVELAND.

P. S. You know that Sir George, Mrs. Walter, Delia, and Olivia, all love you, forgive me then for uniting their affections with mine, and presenting them in one *bouquet* together, instead of offering them to your acceptance in detached sprigs.

Delia has slept all the time I have been writing ; she wakes this moment ; she is much refreshed—I fly to tell Sir George.

LETTER LII.

Miss CLEVELAND to Lady BARTON.

St. Omers.

OUR fears have been much increased for Delia's life, since I wrote last, but, thank Heaven, they are now happily over; her disorder turned out to be the measles: the physicians have pronounced her out of danger, and all our spirits are attuned to the sweet harmony of love and joy—If I had not been witness of them, I should not easily have credited an account of the extravagancies which Sir George was guilty of, during her illness.

I find, Louisa, that when these philosophic gentlemen are thrown the least
out

out of their bias, they are not a bit more steady than ourselves; and “ Hang up philosophy ” should be the motto of them all, whenever their passions are thoroughly interested.—But not to treat my brother too severely, his was a very particular case; and had his treasure been snatched from his arms, almost in the moment he had recovered it, the trial would, I think, have been too severe for human fortitude.

The messenger returned from Toulouse while Delia was in the utmost danger; we did not therefore at that time trouble ourselves to inquire what Mrs. Colville had said, or done, on this extraordinary occasion; but we are since informed, that she absolutely insists on her daughter's being dead and buried, and denies her

her having placed her in the convent— It is shocking to think how very near she was to speaking truth, at the very time she uttered this falsehood.

She sent off another express to the superior of the Ursulines, with a letter to tell her, that more than her life depended on her steadiness in denying her ever having received Delia into the convent; and promising to give a thousand guineas to the foundation, provided she took care to secrete her effectually.

The good old lady has put this letter into my brother's possession, and he in return, has made a present to the sisterhood of five hundred pounds.— This paper would be proof sufficient against Mrs Colville, if we had not a still more undoubted

undoubted evidence in the person of our dear Delia.

The moment her health is established, we shall return to England, and, notwithstanding my joy at her recovery, I shall quit St. Omers with regret, as I cannot prevail on my beloved Mrs. Walter to accompany us.—She and her sweet little girl are perfectly idolized in the convent; and I fear if Mrs. Walter's situation would admit of her taking the veil, that she would certainly pass the remainder of her days in that quiet asylum.

To prevent this, I wish long life to the most worthless being upon earth—I should not specify Colonel Walter here, if Mrs. Colville were not alive.—I wish they were married together, and then I

am pretty sure there is not a pair, in the drawing-room of Pandæmonium, that would not readily give them due place and precedence—But I will have done with these infernals—and now for your long, too long unanswered letter.

I hope by this time Sir William's recovery has removed the anxiety you must necessarily feel on his illness, and released you from a confinement that might possibly injure your health—Were it not for these considerations, I know of few offices more pleasing than attending a person we love, in slight disorders—There is something extremely flattering to a generous mind, in the idea of administering relief to another's pains—To

“ Explain the thought, explore the asking eye ! ”

What a delightful employment ! and when crowned with success by the reco-

very of our patient, we are conscious of a certain exultation in the mind, which can only arise from the certainty of having done what nature claims, and charity enjoins.

I have of late experienced great pleasure in the execution of this duty, from my attendance on Mrs. Walter, and Delia, and am therefore inclined to elevate the office of nurse-tending, by placing it amongst our rational pleasures, and rescuing it from the mean character of one of the mere *duties* of life.

Yet I fear I shall make but few converts to my opinion; especially amongst the gay world, who, looking upon it in such a servile light, rank it with fasting, penitence and prayer; and too often postpone them together, till they may need

need them all themselves, and then are left, in their turn, to the care of servants and other mercenaries.—*Mais assez sur ce point.*

If Miss Ashford be a woman of sense, you run no hazard in trusting her with your opinion of Colonel Walter, though she were ever so much in love:—If she be weak, she stands more in need of such a friendly warning; and if she should break with you, in consequence of it, I think you may easily console yourself for the loss of such an acquaintance, by reflecting that you acted from a spirit of friendship, of which she has shewn herself unworthy.

I perfectly approve of your conduct towards the person himself; and am, for your sake, glad to exculpate Lord Lu-

can from the weakness, might I not add the dishonour, of having made a confidant.—What a charming girl is *our* Harriet!—I must call her so; for indeed, I have a very great claim to her affection, from having, unsolicited, bestowed so large a portion of mine on her, which I hope, when she is Lady Lucan—don't start, Louisa—and her heart quite at ease, she will generously repay.

Now, pray let me be indulged in talking a little of myself, *et mon pauvre amant humilié et humiliant*,—for I believe one, and confess the other.—My brother has informed me of Lord Hume's misadventures at Naples; the particulars of which I shall not trouble you with at present, as they are nothing different from the too general pranks and hazards of youthful spirits, and may serve us better
to

to laugh at, on the first *tête-a-tête* we may ever have the pleasure of enjoying together.

I bestow a generous wish that Sir George's notion about this matter may prove true; that as he has not only *seen*, but *felt*, his folly and extravagance, he may be more likely to act prudently, for the rest of his life, than if he had never erred.

This is a maxim universally propagated, and may in some instances be true; but I can scarce think it a sufficient foundation for a woman of sense, to build her happiness on—To a man who has been accustomed to the artful blandishments of an abandoned woman, I should much fear that the delicate endearments of a

N 2

wife

268 THE HISTORY OF

wife would appear as tasteless and insipid, as true wit to the epigrammatist, or the sweetest viand to the spiced palate.

But all this is merely matter of speculation, and of no manner of consequence to me; for Lord Hume has never yet attempted to pay me a visit, either at Paris, or here; and Sir George has not hitherto been in a situation to invite him, especially as, from a very proper delicacy, he has never acquainted him with the circumstances of Miss Colville's story; and though we set out from Paris at the same time, he kept different stages from us, all the way.

The account that my brother has just given me of that particular, is this, that they had agreed at Naples, to travel together

gether to England, but on their arrival at Paris, and his hinting to him that I had come to meet him there, on account of some singular piece of business or other, he had immediately estranged himself from any further connection with him; saying, after his lively manner, that as he looked upon himself to be in the nature of a *redeemed knight*, he thought it his bounden duty to attend his deliverer, in the quality of an humble 'squire, till he had escorted him safe into his own country; but should wait upon him at such a respectful and unprying distance, as might leave the privacy, both of his conversation and transactions, perfectly free from any manner of restraint.

My brother, you know, was abroad, when our affections commenced and

grew together, while I was under the matronage of my aunt Marriot; when he returned, I had not courage enough to acquaint him with a secret, which would better have become Lord Hume himself to have informed him of, as they have ever lived on the most friendly terms together; and in the present situation of the affair, it would be extremely indiscreet and absurd to breathe the least hints of it now.

Our childish affections, as they must naturally be formed without judgment, are generally unfortunate attachments, as they sometimes leave such traces on the heart, as a long life of maturer reason can scarcely wear away; and to you I will not blush to own, that were it not for that fatal letter which Lord Hume wrote

to me from Naples, and which is as indelibly engraved on my heart as the first impression he made there, I could again be weak enough, were he to solicit it, to reassume those rosy fetters which I fancied our juvenile hands had formed sufficiently strong to hold us both for life.—But that letter, Louisa! I cannot forget it—I must therefore try to forget the writer of it!

I am, however, vastly pleased with the delicacy of his present behaviour.—I told you, in my last, that he lodges opposite to us; he is generally planted at his window, but whenever I approach mine, he bows and retires immediately.—He has, it seems, no kind of business in this place, but stays here from the mere possibility of his being in some degree, or by some

chance or other, useful to my brother, to whom he thinks himself everlastingly indebted for his kindness to him at Naples.

Gratitude cannot exist in a base mind. —How then can gratitude and ingratitude subsist in the same heart?—How can the same man run so far in arrears to the account of love, and be so ready to overpay the debt of friendship? Were he a man hackneyed in the ways of the world, I should not be so much surprised at this inconsistency of character.

Men of galantry, I have heard, consider women as bigotted catholics do heretics, and hold no faith with them;—And that sweet line which Shakespeare has put into the mouth of the innocent

Juliet,

Juliet, is repeated, with perhaps an equal degree of contemptible exultation, by the abandoned courtier, and the apeing cit,

“ At lovers perjuries, they say, Jove laughs.”

But Lord Hume is young, and youth is the spring of virtue; at least it is the season when we are most liable to feel

“ The compunctious visitings of Nature,”

in consequence of our trespassing against her laws, by injuring the peace or happiness of others.

But I am myself trespassing against her first emotion, that of self-preservation, by dwelling on a subject which must for ever be productive of pain, notwithstanding my repeated efforts to blunt the arrow's point.

I congratulate you on the near prospect of happiness which opens to your friend, Miss Leister—May it terminate in the possession of all her wishes! I hope she is by this time Lady Creswell; and that my sweet little Harriet had the pleasure and honour of being her par-nymph—I consider this office as a step to advancement, and I suppose most young ladies are of my opinion, as they are generally very desirous of it.

I think I have now, though slightly, touched upon every article of your last letter; and I hope to find a packet from you, at my return to Dover-street, and that soon, very soon after, I shall be able to give you an account of the joining of a pair, whose hearts are, I believe, as firmly united, as any that ever took hands,

hands, from the first wedding in Eden,
down to this present day.

Adieu, my dear Louisa; you are
loved and remembered by all here, but
by none more affectionately than

F. CLEVELAND.

LETTER LIII.

Lord HUME to Lord LUCAN.

St. Omers.

HERE I am, and here, like a fool
as I am, I have been loitering,
these three weeks, without any kind of
business or pleasure to pursue, or even
a creature to converse with, except honest
old Saunders, who wonders mightily at
my lordship, *for passing my time so lone-
somenely*, as he phrases it.

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You

276 THE HISTORY OF

You will, perhaps, wonder too, till I inform you that I have the pleasure of seeing Fanny Cleveland, every day—Don't envy me, Lucan! for I am only permitted to gaze at her, across the street, where we both live, at present—I wish I had a little of the fascinating power of the basilisk in my eyes, that might make the dear girl throw herself into my arms; and may I perish if I would injure her, when she was folded there.

But how came I here in the midst of my friends, alone, you'll be curious enough to ask? To which I can make no other answer than to repeat the hint I gave you, from Paris, with regard to some mystery or other, relative to Sir George's concerns. It cannot be any affair of galantry, or a sister would not be
his

his confidante—it cannot be a business of honour, or I should probably have been let into the secret—we may fairly conclude then, that it must certainly be some second love engagement, or other, of difficulty, which his romantic punctilio may not leave him yet at liberty to divulge—For he appeared to be one of the *knights of the sorrowful countenance*, as well as your lordship, when I met him first at Naples—However that matter may be, I have taken care, ever since his *reserved communication* to me, never to distress him by my visits; and though we travel the same road together, I may be rather said to *attend* on, than *accompany* him, all the way.

I remember when my infatuation for Margarita was at the height, your
telling

278 THE HISTORY OF

telling me that I loved Fanny Cleveland notwithstanding—I was surprised at an assertion then, which I now find to be true—But allowing this fact, which I suppose she must be certain of, as well as you, by my hankering after her at this rate, and the timid respect I treat her with, from my window, which is directly opposite to her's—

“Tell me my heart, if this be love.”

Don't you think she uses me rather too severely? But all lover's are unreasonable—and false one's deserve mortification.

Though perhaps it may be my own fault that I am kept thus aloof; for I am such a bashful penitent, that I have not courage enough to desire leave to
wait

wait on her, though surely some favourable interval might be contrived, even amidst the occupation of the most secret family intercourse, to afford sufficient leisure for the common decencies of friendship, or politeness.

I would give any consideration that the first interview was over, end as it may; but I do not urge it, though I am convinced that Sir George knows nothing, either of the engagements, or the breach, between his sister and me—I wish I could pluck up heart of grace enough to tell him all about it. For, as I told you before, he is a very sensible man; and though he had lately some honourable attachment or other, and may perhaps have entered into a new one since—without any manner of imputation—for
constancy

constancy to the grave, is both madness and folly—yet I think it is at least ten to one, that he has had some little *gayeté de cœur*, in the Margarita stile, himself, at some time of his life, and therefore would not make such a fuss about a man's having strayed a little out of his road, on a common, as his prudish sister might do, who to be sure, like all other Dianas, steers exactly by rule and compass.

I wish you were here, this moment, to advise me how to conduct myself under my present difficulty, for I am in confounded awkward circumstances; and though you pretend to be a much modest-er youth than me, I will be hanged, were you in my situation, if you would not extricate yourself much easier than I can possibly contrive to do.

But

But whither has my former undaunted spirit taken its flight to, of late? I had once the courage to give a bold affront, and yet tremble now at the justice of asking pardon for it—Thus conscience, *conscience*, Lucan, *makes cowards of us all*.

If they get over to England before I have obtained leave to wait on Miss Cleveland, it is all over with me; for I may visit Sir George seven years, and never see his sister. My last resource must be to get into the same packet-boat with her, and pray most devoutly for a good storm, in our passage, that we may be cast away, and that I may have an opportunity, like Jaffier—

“To save her life, with half the loss of mine!”

Or else, that the waves may swallow me
and

and my folly together, and so leave no trace behind of your affectionate friend,

HUME.

P. S. You are so confoundedly dry, and uncommunicative, that I have left off asking you any more questions about your mistress—If she should turn out a *diavola*, like mine—I mean Margarita—I am sure you won't be such a simpleton as to tell me; and yet it would be but good-natured of you, to let me laugh in turn.

Write to me, however, and direct to Almack's; for I hear we are all to set out for old England next week.

L E T.

LETTER LIV.

Lord HUME to Lord LUCAN.

ST. Omer's still, and my tutelar Saint
 shall *Omer* be, as long as I exist—
 Little did I think, my dear Lucan, when
 I concluded my last letter, that I should
 write to you again from this place, where
 the dull uniformity of my life seemed
 nothing calculated to afford the least sub-
 ject matter for another line; but chance—
 how much are we all indebted to chance!
 —has happily furnished me with materials
 sufficient to write an epic poem, if I were
 but as good a poet *Homer* as, who must
 certainly have taken his name from this
 place—*H non est litera*, you know—For
 I insist upon it, that the burning of three
 real good and substantial houses in this
 town,

town, is to the full as interesting a subject, to all mortals now living, as the famous conflagration of his imaginary Troy.

I further affirm, that Helen was but a sun-burnt dowdy, to the lovely Fanny Cleveland, whom I, happier far than any hero, living or dead, have just now rescued from the flames! and that the gentle Delia Colville is much handsomer than Madam Andromache, who, I think, ranked next to her in beauty; that Sir George Cleveland is as brave as *Hector*; and that your friend Hume, is at least as much in love as monsieur *Paris*: I do not mean either the Taylor, or the Saint of that name, but the very identical Trojan, with whom Leda's daughter ventured herself on ship-board, as my adorable Fanny will presently with me.

May prosperous gales attend our *Argos*; a richer fure than ever failed from *Colchis*! for I do not now stand in need of the machinery of a storm—The glorious element of fire has purged away my foulness, and, like the asbestos, I am rendered pure again. My Fanny, too, rises a new-born phoenix from her nest.

I am in such spirits, Lucan, that I find it impossible to give you a rational account of this charming adventure—Suffice it then to say, that I had the *happiness*—that expression is too faint—*anagogy** is the word—to save my Fanny's life! may I not add—I dare not pronounce it—She must, she will be grateful; in her soft looks and downcast eyes, I read my pardon signed—The regards

* A divine extasy, or oracular sensation.

286 THE HISTORY OF

of anger are erect and fierce ; those of disdain, oblique and scornful—But Fanny's eyes ! they never were so beautiful as now—scarce raise their lovely lids, and only sparkle through their sable fringe, like stars in a clear sky.—I think that is a poetical image ; beat it, Lucan, and I'll allow you to be about half as much in love as I am.

I cannot stay to scribble any more to you, rejoice with me, congratulate me, and believe me yours, sincerely

HUME.

P. S. If I ever recover my wits again, I'll deal out the particulars of my *trial ordeal*—but believe me I would prefer my present inebriation to all the sober sense that ever was, from Solomon down to Samuel—need I add the fir-name of Johnson here ?

LETTER LV.

Lord LUCAN to Lord HUME.

I Received both your letters, my dear Hume, by the same packet, and as I think it much pleasanter to congratulate than condole, I shall only reply to the last of them; for if you are, as I now begin to think, a true lover, your present happiness must have banished every trace of your former disquiet.

You have, indeed, my lively friend, been mightily indebted to chance, and I hope you will pardon me for saying, that it has done more in your favour than you had any right to have hoped for— But you careless fellows sometimes profit more by getting into scrapes, than we sober ones do by keeping out of them.

I think

I think it requires the utmost effort of disinterested friendship, not to envy you the happiness of having been serviceable to the woman you love—And such a woman too! whose generous nature can be softened into a forgiveness of injuries, by the small merit of having done an act, that any man in the world, though not a lover, would have been proud to have performed. But who is Delia Colville, pray? This is another personage added to your former drama—being her first appearance on the stage—But she must be the new mistress of Sir George, I suppose, whom you hinted at before, and so that mystery is unravelled at last.

Helas! que mon sort est plus bizarre—
The object of my adoration has been ill, dangerously ill, for some time; and I
have

have not even dared to express my sorrow for her sufferings, or relieve my anxiety by incessant and minute inquiries about her health — We are many, many miles, asunder, almost at the opposite extremes of this kingdom; and I am debarred even the poor indulgence of lamenting by secret correspondence, the pangs I hourly feel from absence—But she is the ruler of my destiny, and I will not murmur or repine at whatever she shall ordain.

Do I not then deserve that chance or fortune should do something in favour of such an humble and patient sufferer, as I am?—Yet what can it do for me! circumstanced as my unhappy passion is, it must be criminal even to hope that those insuperable bars which now

290 THE HISTORY OF

divide us, should ever be removed—
And yet my weak, my guilty heart,
even at this moment, feels a gleam of
joy, in thinking that there is a chance,
which soon may set her free—Let me
not dwell upon the subject, or breathe
a wish that must render me unworthy
of her.

I have received an invitation to attend
the nuptials of an intimate friend of
mine, who has been long in love with
a very amiable young woman, but till
now, “ With-held by parents.” —
Though utterly unfit for any scene of
festivity, I cannot refuse this summons,
as I am truly interested in the happiness
both of the bride and bridegroom—I
shall, therefore, set out immediately
for Dublin. The wedding will be ce-
lebrated

lebrated a few miles from it ; but direct to me there.

And if you have yet descended from your hyperbolical heights, pray let me have a simple news-paper paragraph about the fire, and the facts that attended it. Your hopeless state has been bettered, I find, by the same unnatural means that the wretched farmers of this country use with their land ; when their crops begin to grow thin, they burn it. But you are a lucky fellow in every thing—Even your ill behaviour to Miss Cleveland, turns out now to your advantage—A woman affords an irrefragable proof of her love, who forgives such an affront ; for if she does, believe me, that 'tis her own passion, not your chivalry, that has recovered her to you.

Adieu,

LUCAN.

L E T T E R LVI.

Lady BARTON to Miss CLEVELAND.

Elm-grove near Dublin.

THANK you, my Fanny, for the pleasure I have received from all your letters, but particularly for the last, which announces the glad tidings of Delia's recovery, of my brother's approaching happiness, and of your return to England.

You will see, by the date of this, that I have made an excursion from South-field, since my last—Sir William, who is now, I hope, in a fair way of recovery, has at last consented to Lucy's most earnest and repeated request, and has kindly permitted me to attend her nuptials.

tials—He intends to pass the time of my absence with Colonel Walter—I am sorry he has chosen him for his companion, but what arguments could I oppose to his inclinations?

On my arrival in Dublin, yesterday morning, I was met by my beloved Lucy, and her beloved lover—I never saw delicate happiness so strongly impressed upon elegant features, as it appeared in both their countenances; yet there was a little mixture of timidity in Lucy's eyes, which abated their vivacity, but increased that charming look of sensibility which is the natural result of refined tenderness—the most irresistible of female charms.

Harriet, who came with me, is in high spirits; she is to have the honour
you

you wished her, of being bride-maid, on this occasion — Young girls are always delighted at the prospect of a wedding, and consider that most solemn and hazardous act of our lives merely as a festival — When, alas! — But this wedding will, I hope, and believe, justify their opinion, and make a holiday for both their lives. Amen, I say, with all my heart!

Mrs. Layton, Lucy, Harriet, and I, came here yesterday, in my coach. This morning I have been all about the place, and never saw a sweeter spot; the prospects are delightful; there is an ample view of the bay of Dublin, and of the opposite hills, which for many miles are richly cultivated and adorned with numberless gardens and villas—There

is nothing in the environs of London, half so beautiful; as neither the Thames or Medway, can pretend to vie, in beauty or in grandeur, with the ocean.

This lovely seat Sir Harry Creswell has just purchased, and settled it as a jointure house, on my fair friend; leaving his family-mansion to descend in the usual course, to his heirs male.—I am pleased with the propriety and delicacy of this action, as I have always thought it extremely cruel that a woman should be obliged to quit her house, on the death of her husband, and be as it were turned adrift in the world, at the time she has lost her chief stay and support in it.

Sir Harry is to dine with us here, this day, and to go back to Dublin,

which is just six miles off, at night: to-morrow he returns here again, to part from his Lucy no more. The ceremony is then to be performed in a neat private chapel within the demesne—Miss Creswell, a sister of Sir Harry's, is to be the other bride-maid; and his bride-men, whoever they are to be, will I suppose, attend him hither.

I hear a carriage driving furiously, and am not yet dressed—It must be Sir Harry—Lovers are impatient—'Tis he, indeed; but can I believe my sight? Lord Lucan with him! My fate pursues me! O Fanny! I can write no more.

Adieu,

7 DE 64 L. BARTON.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

